



# SEVERE ACUTE RESPIRATORY SYNDROME

## GUIDELINES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### Interim Guidelines about Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) For Airline Flight Crew Members

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is monitoring reports of outbreaks of a severe form of pneumonia, called severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS). Because the outbreak has initially affected international travelers who have recently visited mainland China; Hong Kong; Singapore; and Hanoi, Vietnam, CDC issued a travel advisory for people traveling from that area (URL: [www.cdc.gov/travel/other/acute\\_resp\\_syn\\_multi.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/travel/other/acute_resp_syn_multi.htm)). Additional information is available from the World Health Organization at [www.who.int/csr/sars/en/](http://www.who.int/csr/sars/en/). These websites are updated continually as new information is learned.

The cause of the illness is being intensively investigated but has not yet been pinpointed. We know that the illness appears to be spread by close person-to-person contact, such as between a healthcare worker and an ill patient or among family members. There is no evidence at this time suggesting that the infection is spread through casual contact in large groups of people (e.g., schools, churches, or non-healthcare settings).

As with all infectious illnesses, the first line of defense is careful hand hygiene. As a general rule, it is good practice to wash hands frequently with soap and water; if no visible soil is present, alcohol-based hand rubs may be used as an alternative.

If you are concerned that a passenger traveling from one of the areas listed above may be seriously ill with a respiratory illness, you should try to keep him or her separated from the other passengers as much as possible. Provide a surgical mask, if available, for the ill passenger to wear. A surgical mask can reduce the number of droplets coughed into the air. If a surgical mask is not available, provide the passenger with tissues and ask him or her to cover their mouth and nose when coughing. CDC does not recommend the routine use of masks or other personal protective equipment, such as N95 respirators, for the flight crew or healthy passengers. However, paying careful attention to handwashing after contact with the ill passenger is important. The captain is required by law to report the illness to the nearest U.S. Quarantine Station ([www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dq/quarantine\\_stations.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dq/quarantine_stations.htm)). Quarantine officials will arrange for appropriate medical assistance to be available when the airplane lands.

Be aware of the symptoms described in CDC's Health Alert Notice (URL: [www.cdc.gov/ncidod/sars/travel\\_alert.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/sars/travel_alert.htm)). If you become ill and you are concerned about SARS, see your health-care provider and tell him or her about your possible exposure.

For more information, visit [www.cdc.gov/ncidod/sars](http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/sars) or call the CDC public response hotline at (888) 246-2675 (English), (888) 246-2857 (Español), or (866) 874-2646 (TTY)

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