



# SEVERE ACUTE RESPIRATORY SYNDROME (SARS)

SARS is a contagious and sometimes fatal respiratory illness caused by the SARS-associated coronavirus (SARS-CoV). SARS first appeared in China in November 2002. Within a few months, SARS spread worldwide, carried by unsuspecting travelers. SARS showed how quickly infection can spread in a highly mobile and interconnected world. On the other hand, concerted international cooperation allowed health experts to quickly contain the spread of the disease. While it seems SARS has subsided, with no known transmission of SARS anywhere in the world since 2004, it is always best to be informed and prepared.



## ***Transmission (Spread of the Disease) and Symptoms***

- SARS is thought to be spread through close person-to-person contact and is most effectively spread through respiratory droplets emitted when an infected individual coughs or sneezes.
- These droplets may be transferred through the air when breathing close to an infected individual and by touching an area covered with the droplets.
- Once exposed, SARS may incubate in the body for 2–10 days.
- Symptoms include the following—
  - Early-onset fever (100.4°F [38°C] or more)
  - Headache, body aches, and diarrhea
  - A dry, nonproductive cough, which may lead to hypoxia (low oxygen levels in the blood)
  - Pneumonia
- An individual may be contagious up to 10 days after the fever and respiratory symptoms subside.

## ***Treatment***

- There is currently no specific treatment for SARS.
- Infected individuals should be treated with the same techniques as any other severe pneumonia.

## ***Prevention***

- Always wash hands with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Avoid touching anything or anyone with unwashed hands.
- Cover mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing, and encourage others to do so.

## ***Where to Find Additional Information***

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)—<http://www.cdc.gov/sars/about/fs-sars.html>
- World Health Organization—<http://www.who.int/csr/sars/en/>
- Ready Army—[www.ready.army.mil](http://www.ready.army.mil)

**It's up to you. Prepare strong. Get an emergency supply kit with enough supplies for at least three days, make an emergency plan with your family and be informed about what might happen.**

