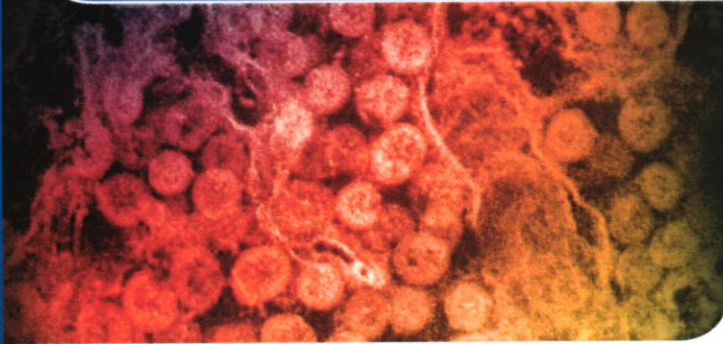


# Information about Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS)



## What is MERS?

Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) is a respiratory illness. It is caused by a virus called Middle East Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus, or MERS-CoV. This virus was first reported in 2012 in Saudi Arabia. It is different from any other coronaviruses that have been found in people before.

## What is the source of MERS-CoV?

MERS-CoV likely came from an animal source in the Arabian Peninsula<sup>1</sup>. In addition to humans, MERS-CoV has been found in camels in several countries. It is possible that some people became infected after having contact with camels. However, more information is needed to figure out the possible role that camels and other animals may play in transmission of MERS-CoV.

## What are the symptoms and complications that MERS can cause?

Most people confirmed to have MERS-CoV infection have had severe acute respiratory illness with symptoms of:

- fever
- cough
- shortness of breath

About 3 to 4 out of every 10 people reported with MERS have died. Most of the people who died had an underlying medical condition. Some infected people had mild symptoms (such as cold-like symptoms) or no symptoms at all.

## How does the virus spread?

MERS-CoV, like other coronaviruses, is thought to spread from an infected person's respiratory secretions, such as through coughing. However, the precise ways the virus spreads are not currently well understood.

MERS-CoV has spread from ill people to others through close contact, such as caring for or living with an infected person. Infected people have spread MERS-CoV to others in healthcare settings, such as hospitals.

## Have there been MERS cases in the United States?

In May 2014, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) confirmed two cases of MERS. Both patients were healthcare providers who recently traveled from Saudi Arabia, where they are believed to have been infected. Both were hospitalized in the U.S. and later discharged after fully recovering. CDC and other public health partners continue to look for and test people who may have MERS; more than 750 people in the United States have tested negative. See CDC's MERS in the U.S. website for the most current information: <http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/mers/us.html>.

## Am I at risk for MERS-CoV infection in the United States?

The MERS situation in the U.S. represents a very low risk to the general public in this country. CDC continues to closely monitor the situation. Some people may be at increased risk for MERS-CoV infection, including

- recent travelers from the Arabian Peninsula<sup>1</sup>
- people who have had close contact, such as caring for or living with, an ill traveler from the Arabian Peninsula<sup>1</sup>
- people who have had close contact, such as caring for or living with, a confirmed case of MERS
- healthcare personnel who do not use recommended infection-control precautions
- people who have had contact with camels

If you think you may have been exposed to MERS-CoV, call ahead to a doctor and see information on the CDC website for People Who May Be at Increased Risk for MERS (<http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/mers/risk.html>).

