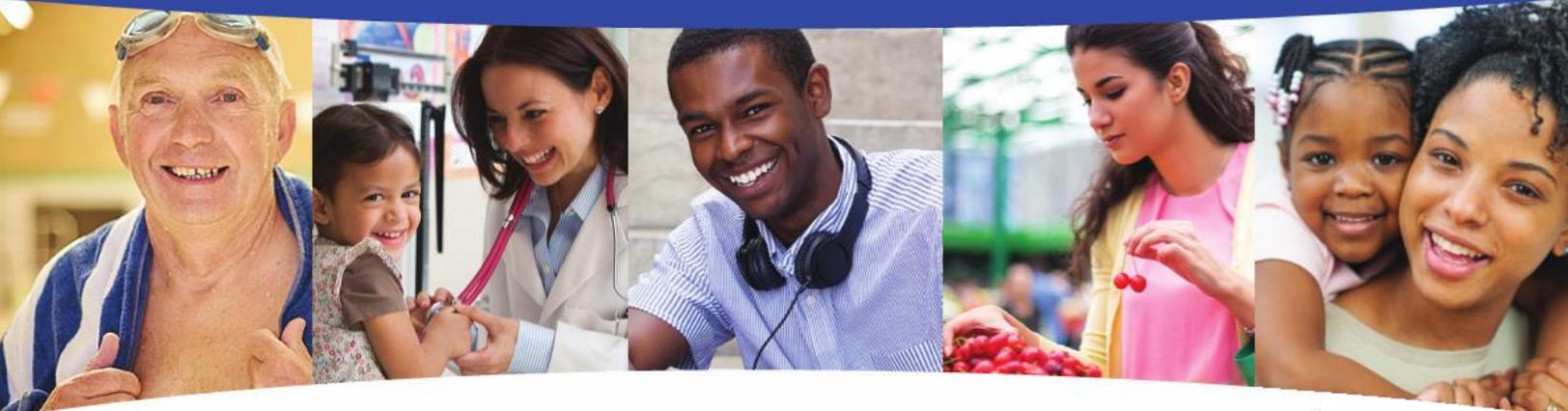


Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) Fact Sheet

Toledo-Lucas County Health Department | Emergency Preparedness



What is Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS)?

Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) is an illness caused by a virus (coronavirus) called Middle East Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus (MERS-CoV). Most MERS patients developed a severe acute respiratory illness with symptoms of fever, cough, and shortness of breath.

Health officials first reported the disease in Saudi Arabia in September 2011. Through investigations, health officials later identified that the first known cases of MERS occurred in Jordan in April 2012. So far, all cases of MERS have been linked through travel to, or residence in, countries in and near Arabian Peninsula. MERS has spread from ill people to others through close contact, such as caring for or living with an infected person.

What are the symptoms and complications of MERS?

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

- Fever
- Cough
- Shortness of breath

Some people also had gastrointestinal symptoms including diarrhea and nausea/vomiting. For many people with MERS, more severe complications followed, such as pneumonia and kidney failure.

Based on what researchers know so far, people with pre-existing medical conditions may be more likely to become infected with MERS, or have a severe case. Pre-existing conditions from reported cases included diabetes, cancer, and chronic lung, heart, and kidney disease. Individuals with weakened immune systems are also at higher risk for getting MERS or having a severe case.

How is MERS spread?

MERS is thought to be spread from an infected person's respiratory secretions, such as through coughing. However, the precise way the virus spreads is not currently well understood. MERS has spread from ill people to others through close contact. Public health agencies continue to investigate clusters of cases in several countries to better understand how MERS spreads from person to person.

How do you prevent MERS?

Currently, there is no vaccine to prevent MERS infection. CDC routinely advises that people help protect themselves from respiratory illnesses by



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taking everyday preventive actions:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for 20 seconds.
- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid personal contact, such as kissing or sharing cups or eating utensils, with sick people.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces and objects, such as doorknobs.

What is the treatment for MERS?

There is no specific antiviral treatment recommended for MERS infection. Individuals with MERS often receive medical care to help relieve symptoms. For severe cases, current treatment includes care to support vital organ function.

For more information:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC):
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/mers/index.html>

The Toledo-Lucas County Health Department is committed to providing relevant and timely information during a public health emergency.

For the latest information, please visit:
www.lucascountyhealth.com



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