



# SEVERE ACUTE RESPIRATORY SYNDROME

## GUIDELINES AND RECOMMENDATION

### Interim Guidelines about Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) for International Adoptees and Their Families

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has been working closely with the World Health Organization (WHO) to investigate cases of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS). SARS is a respiratory illness that usually begins with a fever (measured temperature greater than 100.4°F [ $>38.0^{\circ}\text{C}$ ]). The fever is sometimes associated with chills or other symptoms, including headache, general feeling of discomfort, and body aches. Some people also experience mild respiratory symptoms at the outset.

CDC has issued two types of notices to travelers: advisories and alerts. A **travel advisory** recommends that nonessential travel be deferred; a **travel alert** does not advise against travel, but informs travelers of a health concern and provides advice about specific precautions. CDC updates information on its website on the travel status of areas with SARS ([www.cdc.gov/ncidod/sars/travel.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/sars/travel.htm)) as the situation evolves.

If you are so close to completing the adoption process that delay is not feasible or desirable and you decide to go ahead with your travel to an area with SARS, please keep the following guidelines in mind.

#### Before you leave:

- Assemble a travel health kit containing basic first aid and medical supplies. Be sure to include a thermometer, household disinfectant, a supply of surgical masks, disposable gloves and alcohol-based hand rubs for hand hygiene.
- Inform yourself and others who may be traveling with you about SARS. For information about this illness, see CDC's SARS Web site ([www.cdc.gov/ncidod/sars/](http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/sars/)).
- Be sure you are up to date with all your shots, and see your health-care provider at least 4 to 6 weeks before travel to get any additional shots or information you may need. For information on CDC health recommendations for international travel, see CDC's Travelers' Health site ([www.cdc.gov/travel/](http://www.cdc.gov/travel/)).
- You may wish to check your health insurance plan or get additional insurance that covers medical evacuation in the event of illness. Information about medical evacuation services can be found at this U.S. Department of State page ([www.travel.state.gov/medical.html](http://www.travel.state.gov/medical.html)).
- Identify in-country health-care resources in advance of your trip.

#### While you are in an area with SARS:

- To protect against SARS infection, wash your hands frequently. As much as possible, avoid crowds. If wearing a surgical mask adds to your comfort level, you may wish to do so while in close contact with people who may be ill with respiratory symptoms.
- People with SARS pose a risk of transmission to close personal contacts and health-care personnel in close contact. The duration of time after onset of symptoms during which a person with SARS can transmit the disease to others is unknown.

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### If you think you or a family member has SARS or symptoms compatible with SARS:

- If you or a family member becomes ill with fever and respiratory symptoms (for example, cough or shortness of breath), a visit to a health-care provider is strongly recommended. **Tell the provider about your symptoms prior to going to the office or emergency room so arrangements can be made, if necessary, to prevent transmission to others in the health-care setting.** The nearest U.S. Embassy or Consular Office can help you find a provider in the area. Again, you are encouraged to identify these resources in advance. Do not travel while sick and limit your contact with others as much as possible to help prevent the spread of any infectious illness you may have.
- The person who is ill should cover their mouth and nose with a facial tissue when coughing or sneezing. If possible, they should wear a surgical mask during close contact with healthy people to prevent spread of infectious droplets. If the sick person is unable to wear a surgical mask, family members should wear surgical masks when in close contact with the person who is ill.
- Use of disposable gloves should be considered for any direct contact with body fluids of a person with SARS. **However, gloves are not intended to replace proper hand hygiene.** Immediately after activities involving contact with body fluids, gloves should be removed and discarded and hands should be cleaned. Gloves must never be washed or reused.
- All family members staying with a person with SARS should carefully follow recommendations for hand hygiene (e.g., frequent hand washing or use of alcohol-based hand rubs), particularly after contact with body fluids (e.g., respiratory secretions, urine, or feces).
- People with SARS should avoid sharing eating utensils, towels, and bedding with others, although these items can be used by others after routine cleaning, such as washing or laundering with soap and hot water.
- Environmental surfaces (e.g., toilets, sinks) soiled by body fluids should be cleaned with a household disinfectant according to manufacturer's instructions; gloves should be worn during this activity. Wash hands afterwards and throw the gloves away.
- Other family members staying with a person with SARS do not need to restrict their outside activities unless they develop symptoms of SARS, such as a fever or respiratory illness.

### After your return:

- Families returning from one of the affected areas should monitor their health for 10 days. Any family member who becomes ill with fever or respiratory symptoms during this period should consult a health-care provider and tell him or her about their recent travel. **Tell the provider about your symptoms prior to going to the office or emergency room so arrangements can be made, if necessary, to prevent transmission to others in the health-care setting.**
- Close contacts of person with SARS who develop fever or respiratory symptoms should be evaluated by a health-care provider. **Before** the evaluation, health-care providers should be informed that the individual is a close contact of a person with SARS. These persons with symptoms of SARS should follow the same precautions recommended for people with SARS.

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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