



# Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS)

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## Key facts

### Transmission: Droplet and direct contact

- When infected people cough, sneeze, blow their nose or spit, they spread small droplets through the air, which are then breathed in by other people
- Direct contact (for example, through kissing, sharing cups or eating utensils) with infected saliva or nose mucus

### Most vulnerable to severe consequences

- People with weakened immune systems or underlying chronic diseases

### Most vulnerable to contracting the disease

- Adults between 25—70 years

### Symptoms

- Fever (usually)
- Cough (usually)
- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath (usually)
- Headache (sometimes)
- Sore throat (sometimes)
- Abdominal pain (sometimes)

- Diarrhoea (sometimes)
- Muscle pain (sometimes)

# What can you do to prevent and control an epidemic?

## Monitoring the community and identifying sick people

- Identify and isolate sick people before they spread the disease to others

## Treatment and management

- Refer suspected cases to health facilities
- Provide psychosocial support to the sick person and their family members

## Sanitation and waste management

- Promote proper disposal of waste that might be contaminated
- Promote disinfection of reusable supplies

## Hand and respiratory hygiene

- Promote good hand hygiene (handwashing with soap)
  - BEFORE: preparing food; eating; feeding a child; treating wounds; or caring for sick people
  - AFTER: using the toilet or cleaning a baby; touching garbage or waste; touching or feeding animals; blowing nose, coughing or sneezing; treating wounds; or caring for sick people
- Promote respiratory hygiene and coughing etiquette (cover your cough or sneeze using your sleeve or a tissue, wash hands after coughing or sneezing, do not spit onto the ground or in public)

## Personal protection and hygiene

- Practise and promote social distancing
- Use and promote personal protective equipment (for example, face masks and gloves) when in contact with potential cases

## Social mobilization and health promotion

- Find out the specific advice being given by health and other relevant authorities
  - Promote recommended health practices (such as social distancing, separation of healthy people and sick people, etc.)
- Model following this advice and inform community members of current health practice advice
- Offer support and encouragement to follow the advice
  - Try to gain understanding about if and why health practice advice is not being followed
  - With the guidance of your supervisor and health authorities, work with communities to overcome barriers to following health advice and recommended practice

## Mapping and community assessment

- Make a map of the community.
- Mark the following information on the map:
  - How many people have fallen sick with SARS? Where?
  - How many people have died? Where? When?
  - Who and where are the vulnerable people?
  - Where are the health facilities? (include traditional healers)
- Record the following information on the back of the map:
  - When did people start to fall sick with SARS?
  - How many people live in the affected community? How many are children under five years?
  - Are there handwashing facilities in the community? Are soap and water always available?
  - How common is it for people to live or work together in crowded spaces?
    - Is there ventilation and fresh air in homes, schools and workplaces?
  - Who and where are the vulnerable people? Who is most affected by SARS?
  - What are the community's habits, practices and beliefs about caring for sick people? Consider any differences in roles and responsibilities between women and men.
  - Is a social mobilization or health promotion programme in place?
  - Which sources do people use/trust the most for information?
    - Are there rumours or misinformation about SARS? What are the rumours?