

# MERS

# OUTBREAK

## What to know about MERS



Cigna is monitoring the developments of the outbreak and we are prepared to help customers, if needed.



24/7/365

Remember that our customer service centers are open 24/7/365 to help customers with questions about their health benefits and other issues that may relate to their benefits.



For more information about the MERS outbreak, visit:  
<http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/mers/about/index.html>  
[http://www.who.int/csr/disease/coronavirus\\_infections/faq/en/](http://www.who.int/csr/disease/coronavirus_infections/faq/en/)

## What is the Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS)?

MERS is a viral respiratory illness caused by a new coronavirus that was first reported in Saudi Arabia in 2012. Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses that can cause diseases ranging from the common cold to Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS).

## How is MERS spread?

MERS, like other coronaviruses, is spread from an infected person's respiratory secretions, such as through coughing or close contact while providing care to an infected patient without appropriate protection. However, the precise ways the virus spreads are not currently well understood. The route of transmission from animals to humans is not fully understood, but camels are likely to be a major reservoir host for MERS and an animal source of infection in humans.

The incubation period for MERS, or the time between when a person is exposed to the virus and when they start to have symptoms, is usually about five or six days, but can range from two to 14 days. The reported mortality rate for MERS varies between 30% and 40%.

## What are the symptoms?

The main symptoms include fever, cough, shortness of breath and pneumonia in some cases; other symptoms may include diarrhea, nausea and vomiting. Persons with chronic conditions such as diabetes, cancer and chronic pulmonary disease, the elderly and persons with debilitated immune systems have higher propensity to get infected or develop a more severe case. **If you show any of these symptoms, please seek medical care immediately.**

## How do I protect myself against the virus?

At this time, no vaccine is available to prevent MERS and there is no specific antiviral treatment recommended by health authorities. All treatment is supportive and based on the patient's clinical condition.



The following general hygiene measures are recommended for protection, for more specific guidelines please visit <http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/mers/hcp/home-care-patient.html>

				
<p><b>Wash your hands often with soap and water. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.</b></p>	<p><b>Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth; germs spread this way.</b></p>	<p><b>Avoid visiting crowded places as much as possible. If you must visit crowded places, do not forget to wear a mask.</b></p>	<p><b>Avoid close contact with sick people.</b></p>	<p><b>Do not touch any animals (especially camels) and do not visit farms while you travel.</b></p>

### If you are sick:

- › Cover your mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze, and throw the tissue in the trash.
- › Avoid contact with other people to keep from infecting them.
- › Contact your doctor immediately if you develop a fever and symptoms of lower respiratory illness, such as cough or shortness of breath.
- › Tell your doctor about your recent travel before you go in for an appointment.

**The material provided here as well as additional information on MERS can be found on the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the World Health Organization websites using the links below:**

- › U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: Please use the following link, <http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/mers/about/index.html>.
- › World Health Organization: Please use the following link, [http://www.who.int/csr/disease/coronavirus\\_infections/en/](http://www.who.int/csr/disease/coronavirus_infections/en/).

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