



STAY ALERT FOR MIDDLE EAST RESPIRATORY SYNDROME (MERS-CoV)

Testing for suspect MERS infections must meet the following case definition:

A person with the following characteristics should be considered a **patient under investigation (PUI)**:

A. **Severe Illness** Fever¹ AND pneumonia or acute respiratory distress syndrome (based on clinical or radiological evidence) AND EITHER:

A. A history of travel from countries in or near the Arabian Peninsula² within 14 days before symptom onset, OR close contact³ with a symptomatic traveler who developed fever and acute respiratory illness (not necessarily pneumonia) within 14 days after traveling from countries in or near the Arabian Peninsula.

-OR-

A. A member of a cluster of patients with severe acute respiratory illness (e.g., fever and pneumonia requiring hospitalization) of unknown etiology in which MERS-CoV is being evaluated, in consultation with state and local health departments in the US.

OR

B. **Milder Illness** Fever¹ AND symptoms of respiratory illness (not necessarily pneumonia; e.g. cough, shortness of breath) AND a history of being in a healthcare facility (as a patient, worker, or visitor) within 14 days before symptom onset in a country or territory in or near the Arabian Peninsula in which recent healthcare-associated cases of MERS have been identified.

OR

C. Fever¹ OR symptoms of respiratory illness (not necessarily pneumonia; e.g. cough, shortness of breath) AND close contact³ with a confirmed MERS case while the case was ill.

¹Fever may not be present in some patients, such as those who are very young, elderly, immunosuppressed, or taking certain medications. Clinical judgement should be used to guide testing of patients in such situations.

²Countries considered in the Arabian Peninsula and neighboring include: Bahrain; Iraq; Iran; Israel, the West Bank, and Gaza; Jordan; Kuwait; Lebanon; Oman; Qatar; Saudi Arabia; Syria; the United Arab Emirates (UAE); and Yemen

³Close contact is defined as a) being within approximately 6 feet (2 meters) or within the room or care area for a prolonged period of time while not wearing recommended PPE; or b) having direct contact with infectious secretions while not wearing recommended PPE. Data to inform the definition of close contact are limited. At this time, brief interactions, such as walking by a person, are considered low risk and do not constitute close contact.

Testing for flu and other respiratory pathogens should be done concurrently.

Take infection control precautions when evaluating patients who meet the above criteria:

- Place surgical mask on the patient immediately
- Place patient in Airborne Infection Isolation Room (AIIR) or if not available a single room with the door closed
- Implement standard, contact, and airborne infection control precautions
- Limit personnel entering the patient's room
- Notify infection preventionists on call
- Ensure that all healthcare workers in contact with the patient wear Personal Protective Equipment (PPE):
 - N95 or higher respirators
 - Goggles or face shields (for high risk procedures such as intubation, etc.)
 - Gown and gloves