



# THE CITY OF NEW YORK

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND MENTAL HYGIENE

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[nyc.gov/health](http://nyc.gov/health)

## Information for Persons Who Live with Patients with the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS)

A family member or someone in your home has recently been diagnosed with Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome or SARS. SARS is a virus that causes respiratory illness and is spread by close person to person contact. Please follow the instructions below to help prevent anyone else in your home from becoming ill with SARS. **It is important that you follow these instructions for 10 days after the person with SARS no longer has a fever and his or her respiratory symptoms (cough, trouble breathing or shortness of breath) are improving.**

- **If you do not feel sick, you do not need to stay home or limit your activities.** It is okay for you to go to work or school. If there are children in your home and they are not sick, it is okay for them to go to school, daycare or other childcare programs.
- **Your household member with SARS must stay at home for 10 days AFTER his/her fever is gone AND his/her respiratory symptoms are improving.** He/she may not go to work or school during this time period. (If the SARS patient is a child, he/she may not go to school, daycare, or other childcare programs during this time period). He/she may not go to any public areas during this 10-day period. Please assist the SARS patient by doing their errands, such as grocery shopping.
- Your household member with SARS should cover his/her mouth with a tissue whenever he/she coughs or sneezes, and after wards he/she should put the used tissue in the regular garbage and wash his/her hands with soap and water.
- When around other people, your household member with SARS should wear a surgical mask that covers the nose and mouth. If that is not possible, then all household members should wear surgical face masks when in close contact or in the same room with the patient. If you need surgical face masks, please call a local drug store or medical supply store, or contact your doctor. You should change your mask at least every day, or sooner if it gets soiled.
- While at home, limit your contact with the SARS patient as much as possible. The SARS patient should sleep in a separate room. Avoid close contact such as kissing.
- **Wash your hands often using soap and water or alcohol-based hand rubs.** Hand washing may be the best way to prevent getting sick.
- Do not share eating utensils (spoons, forks, cups or glasses), towels or bedding (pillows, sheets or blankets). You can use these items after routine cleaning with soap and hot water. Do not share toothbrushes, cigarettes or drinks.
- If any body fluids (secretions from the nose or mouth, urine, vomit or stool) from the SARS patient gets onto household surfaces (such as door knobs or any other object that he/she sneezes or coughs on), the surface should be washed with any standard household cleaner or disinfectant. Rinse the surface with tap water afterwards. Wear gloves during cleaning and wash your hands after you take the gloves off. The gloves should not be re-used and should be thrown in the garbage when done.

- Disposable gloves should be used during any direct contact with the body fluids (such as secretions from the nose or mouth) or stool of a SARS patient. These gloves can be purchased in most medical supply stores and drug stores. Remember to wash your hands after taking off the gloves. The gloves should not be re-used and should be thrown in the garbage when done.
- The SARS virus may also be found in the stool of an infected person. We recommend that the toilet be cleaned with a household detergent or disinfectant after every time that the SARS patient has a bowel movement (stool), especially if he/she has diarrhea.
- Used tissues, face masks and gloves may be thrown out with your regular garbage.
- **The New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene will be calling your home every day to check to see if anyone in your family or household is getting sick.**
- Every one in your home should take their temperature twice a day and write the numbers down in a book or piece of paper along with the date and time. If anyone is taking aspirin, Tylenol (acetaminophen), ibuprofen or any other medicine to lower their fever, they should wait 4 hours before taking their temperature.
- **If anyone in your family or household gets sick with fever (> 100.4 °F or 38 °C) or respiratory symptoms (cough, shortness of breath, or trouble breathing), please call us immediately at the following phone numbers:**

During Business Hours (Monday to Friday from 9 AM to 5 PM): Call 212-788-9830

After Hours: Call the New York City Poison Control Center at 212-764-7667

When you call, please let the person answering the telephone know that you are a close contact of a SARS patient, and that you need to speak to the doctor on call. You should also call your doctor right away and tell him/her that you live with, care for, or have been in close contact with someone who has SARS.

**If you need to go to the doctor's office, you should have a family member or friend drive you in a private car.** Do NOT take public transportation (subway or bus). Wear a surgical face mask on the way to see your doctor. You should go straight to the receptionist when you arrive so that you can be put in a private room while you wait to see the doctor. Try to sit away from others as much as possible. **If you are very sick and need to call an ambulance to take you to the hospital, let the operator know that you may have SARS when you call 911, and let the ambulance crew know when they arrive.**

Remember, these guidelines need to be followed for 10 days after the SARS patient no longer has any fever and his/her respiratory symptoms are improving. For more information, call your doctor or visit the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene's website at <http://www.nyc.gov/html/doh/html/cd/cdsars.html> or the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's website at [www.cdc.gov/ncidod/sars](http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/sars).