



# THE CITY OF NEW YORK

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND MENTAL HYGIENE

Michael R. Bloomberg  
Mayor

Thomas R. Frieden, M.D., M.P.H.  
Commissioner

---

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

## Discharge Instructions for SARS Patients

Dear Patient,

You have 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. Although you may be feeling better and are being sent home from the hospital or clinic, you can still spread the virus to others who are in close contact with you (By “close contact”, we mean someone you live with or who may be taking care of you). **To help prevent your close contacts from getting sick, please follow the guidelines below for 10 days AFTER your fever is gone AND your respiratory symptoms (cough, shortness of breath, or trouble breathing) are improving.**

- **Before you leave the clinic or hospital, you should be given several surgical face masks to take home with you.** You should wear a surgical mask home from the clinic or hospital. When around other people, *even in your own home*, you should wear a mask and be sure it covers your nose and mouth. Ask your doctor to show you how to wear a face mask the correct way. If you need more surgical face masks, call your local drug store or ask your doctor. You should change your mask every day, or sooner if it gets wet or soiled.
- **Take your temperature twice a day and write the numbers down in a book or piece of paper along with the date and time.** If you are taking aspirin, Tylenol (acetaminophen), ibuprofen or any other medicine to lower your fever, you should wait 4 hours before taking your temperature.
- **You may not leave your home for 10 days AFTER your fever stops and your respiratory symptoms are improving.** Stay home from work or school. (A child with suspected SARS must stay home from daycare or other childcare programs). Do not go out in public areas. If you need something from outside your home (like groceries) ask family, friends or neighbors who are not sick to shop for you.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you sneeze, cough or blow your nose – and remember to wash your hands with soap and water after throwing the used tissue in the garbage.
- While at home, limit your contact with others as much as possible. Sleep in a separate room. Avoid close contact such as kissing.
- **Wash your hands often with soap and water or alcohol-based hand rubs.** Hand washing may be the best way to prevent others from getting sick. You should wash your hands after coughing, sneezing, blowing your nose, and going to the bathroom.
- Throw out your used tissues and face masks with your regular garbage.

- Do not share eating utensils (spoons, forks, cups or glasses), towels or bedding (pillows, sheets or blankets) with others. These items can be used again after routine cleaning with soap and hot water. Do not share toothbrushes, cigarettes or drinks.
- If any of your body fluids (such as secretions from your nose or mouth, urine, vomit or stool) gets on surfaces in your home (such as door knobs or any other object that you sneeze or cough on), the surface should be washed with any standard household cleaner or disinfectant. Rinse the surface with tap water afterwards. If someone else does the cleaning, he/she should wear 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 your toilet be cleaned with a household detergent or disinfectant after every time that you have a bowel movement (stool), especially if you have diarrhea.
- **The New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene will be calling your home every day to check to see if you are staying at home and to see if anyone in your family or household is getting sick.**
- **If your symptoms become worse or if your symptoms return, 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 SARS patient, and that you need to speak to the doctor on call.

**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). Please contact your doctor before you leave your home and tell the doctor you have been diagnosed with SARS. 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.**

- If someone you live with or spend time with gets sick with fever or respiratory symptoms (cough, difficulty breathing or shortness of breath), please be sure that s/he calls their doctor right away. Also call the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene at the numbers listed above.

Remember, these guidelines are for 10 days after your fever is gone and your respiratory symptoms are improving. For more information, call your doctor or visit the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene's website (<http://www.nyc.gov/html/doh/html/cd/cdsars.html>) or the website for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention ([www.cdc.gov/ncidod/sars](http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/sars)).