FACTS ABOUT MERS-CoV

What is MERS-CoV (Middle East Respiratory Syndrome Corona Virus)?

- Middle East respiratory syndrome (MERS) is a viral respiratory disease caused by a novel coronavirus (MERS-CoV) that was first identified 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).

- The incubation period for MERS (time between when a person is exposed to MERS-CoV and when they start to have symptoms) is usually about 5 or 6 days, but can range from 2-14 days.

- Although the majority of human cases of MERS have been attributed to human-to-human infections, camels are likely to be a major reservoir host for MERS-CoV and an animal source of MERS infection in humans. However, the exact role of camels in transmission of the virus and the exact route(s) of transmission are unknown.

- The virus does not seem to pass easily from person to person unless there is close contact, such as occurs when providing unprotected care to a patient.

Patients with MERS-COV have been reported to have the following symptoms:

1. Fever
2. Cough
3. Shortness of breath
4. Difficulty of breathing
5. Gastrointestinal symptoms, including diarrhea have also been reported.
6. Pneumonia is common but not always present

Prevention:

1. Wash your hands often with soap and water
2. Cover your nose and mouth with tissue paper when coughing or sneeze. Dispose tissue paper immediately and properly.
3. Avoid touching your face, especially the eye area, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.
4. Avoid close contact with sick people.
5. Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces and objects, such as doorknobs.

FREQUENTLY ASK QUESTION ABOUT MERS-CoV

1. What should I do if I had close contact with a recent traveler from the Arabian Peninsula?

- If you have had close contact with someone within 14 days after they traveled from a country in or near the Arabian Peninsula, and the traveler has/had fever and symptoms of respiratory illness, such as cough or shortness of breath, you should monitor your health for 14 days, starting from the day you were last exposed to the ill person. If you develop fever and symptoms of respiratory illness, such as cough or shortness of breath, you should call ahead to a healthcare provider and mention your recent contact with the traveler. While sick, stay home from work or school and delay future travel to reduce the possibility of spreading illness to others.
2. What if I recently traveled to the Arabian Peninsula or neighboring countries and got sick?

- If you develop a fever and symptoms of respiratory illness, such as cough or shortness of breath, within 14 days after traveling from countries in or near the Arabian Peninsula, you should call ahead to a healthcare provider and mention your recent travel. While sick, stay home from work or school and delay future travel to reduce the possibility of spreading illness to others.

3. Is there a vaccine?

- Currently, there is no vaccine available to protect against MERS.

4. What are the treatments?

- There is no specific antiviral treatment recommended for MERS-CoV infection. Individuals with MERS can seek medical care to help relieve symptoms.

5. Should I be tested for MERS?

- If you develop a fever and symptoms of respiratory illness, such as cough or shortness of breath, within 14 days after travel from a country in or near the Arabian Peninsula, or if you have had close contact with someone showing these symptoms who has recently traveled from this area, you should call ahead to a healthcare provider and mention your recent travel or close contact. Your healthcare provider will work with your state’s public health department to test you for MERS.

6. Is MERS-CoV the same as the SARS virus?

- No. MERS-CoV is not the same coronavirus that caused severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) in 2003. However, like the SARS virus, MERS-CoV is most similar to coronaviruses found in bats.

PAREF Southridge School
Clinic Department

http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/mers/about/index.html
http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/mers-cov/en/
http://www.gov.ph/2014/04/22/infographic-advisory-on-mers-cov/