



HEALTH ADVISORY 101/2003

ADVICE ON SARS FOR SINGAPOREANS AND RESIDENTS TRAVELLING OVERSEAS (Updated 30 May 2003)

General Information

1. The World Health Organisation (WHO) has put up travel advisories in response to the recent outbreaks of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) in several countries. These travel advisories serve as part of a larger strategy to control and prevent the international spread of a disease.
2. WHO recommends travellers to consider postponing all but essential travel to some areas with recent local transmission of SARS. The WHO "SARS Travel Recommendations Summary Table" lists these areas and can be found at www.who.int/csr/sars/travel/

Travel Advice for Singaporeans and Residents of Singapore

3. All Singaporean and residents travelling overseas should be aware of the main symptoms of SARS, which include high fever, cough, and breathing difficulty. Travellers who have these symptoms and have been in SARS-affected areas (updated daily at www.who.int/csr/sars/areas/) in the preceding 10 days are advised to seek medical attention immediately.
4. Singaporeans and residents are strongly advised to postpone all but essential travel to the areas identified in WHO's travel recommendations. (www.who.int/csr/sars/travel/). There are no travel restrictions indicated for other areas.

Precautions for Singaporeans and Residents Travelling Overseas

5. No special precautions are necessary if you are travelling to countries with no recent local spread of SARS.
6. If you have to travel to a SARS-affected areas identified in WHO's travel recommendations, you should take the precautions outlined below to protect yourself. These precautions can also protect you against other common respiratory infections.



Before you leave:

- Check if you have a fever (oral temperature greater than 37.5°C). Do not travel if you are unwell and postpone the trip until you have recovered.
- Pack a thermometer for personal temperature screening.
- Pack some N95 masks¹ (in case you are unable to avoid persons who are unwell with SARS-related symptoms)
- Pack some surgical masks for use to prevent spreading infections to others if you become ill with respiratory symptoms (eg. cough, sneezing).
- Pack some disposable gloves to protect yourself if you had to attend to a travelling companion who is unwell.
- Consider getting travel insurance that covers medical evacuation from SARS-affected areas in the event of illness
- Find out where you can seek medical help while in the SARS-affected area in advance of your trip.

While you are in SARS affected areas:

- Wash your hands frequently with soap and water. You may use an alcohol-based hand rub if there are no washing facilities.
- Avoid touching someone else's respiratory secretions (e.g nose mucus, phlegm), wet tissues, and handkerchiefs.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.
- Avoid crowded places as much as possible.
- Avoid close contact with anyone who looks unwell. If you can, move away from any sick person with a cough. If this is not possible, wear an N95 mask¹ to protect yourself.
- Avoid sharing eating utensils, towels, and bedding with others.
- Monitor your health closely by checking your temperature twice daily.

What to do if you or your travelling companion has SARS-related symptoms?

7. The person who has a fever or other SARS-related symptoms should:
 - Put on a surgical mask.
 - Cover his/her mouth and nose with a facial tissue when coughing or sneezing.
 - Avoid close contact with other people.
 - Seek immediate medical attention. The doctor should be informed of the symptoms prior to the visit so that arrangements can be made to prevent spreading of the infection to others.
8. Any person who takes care of the person ill with SARS-related symptoms should wear an N95 mask¹, disposable gloves and practise good hand hygiene.

¹ Only N95 masks will protect you from contracting SARS. However, these masks have to fit a person well and it takes time to get used to them. If you are using N95 masks, please follow manufacturer's instructions on the proper use.



Upon Returning to Singapore from a SARS-affected area

9. If you have returned from a SARS-affected area, you should monitor your health and check your temperature twice daily for 10 days.
10. During these 10 days, if you become ill with fever, cough, and/or breathing difficulties, please call **993** to request for a special ambulance provided by Ministry of Health to take you to Tan Tock Seng Hospital for an assessment. Please do not use public transport.
11. While waiting for the ambulance, wear a surgical mask and avoid close contact with others.

Further information on SARS

12. For further information on SARS, please call the Ministry of Health Hotline at **1800-333 9999** or visit the MOH website at <http://www.moh.gov.sg/>
13. For the special ambulance service for transportation to Tan Tock Seng Hospital, please call **993** (24 hours).
14. For clarifications on this advisory, please call Professional Training & Registration Branch, Professional Standards & Development Division (MOH) at **6325 9028 & 6325 9491**.
15. Please send feedback on this advisory to MOH_INFO@moh.gov.sg