MERS
Middle East Respiratory Syndrome
The 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.
NEW VIRUS
What is Mers-CoV?

- The Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) is a viral respiratory illness. Mers is caused by a coronavirus called "Middle East Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus" (MERS-CoV).

Mers symptoms
Coronaviruses are common throughout the world; they usually cause mild to moderate upper respiratory illness.
The symptoms include severe acute respiratory illness with symptoms of fever, cough, and shortness of breath.

Spreading the infection
The virus can spread from person to person through close contact. Transmission from infected patients to healthcare personnel has also been observed.

Diagnosis and treatment
At present, cases can only be confirmed after laboratory testing. There is no specific treatment; medical care is supportive and to help relieve symptoms. There is no vaccine.

Since April 2012, more than 80 laboratory-confirmed cases detected globally with one case in the UAE. Forty-five of the confirmed cases have died.

Preventive steps
- Wash your hands often with soap and water or a hand sanitizer and help young children do the same.
- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact, such as kissing, sharing cups, or sharing eating utensils, with sick people.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces, such as toys and doorknobs.

Timeline
- July 7: The first confirmed case is reported in the UAE.
- June 2013: Italy confirms its first case of Mers-CoV, rising to 45.
- May 7, 2013: France reports a confirmed case. A second case is reported five days later.
- March 26, 2013: A 73-year-old man who traveled from Abu Dhabi to Mers in Munich.
- September 22: A male Qatari with similar symptoms is admitted in a London hospital.
- June 10, 2012: The first reported case of a patient suffering from MERS in Saudi Arabia.

Where have the cases been reported?
- Jordan
- Qatar
- UK
- France
- Italy
- Tunisia
- Germany
- UAE
- Saudi Arabia
Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses that can cause diseases ranging from the common cold to Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS).
Typical MERS symptoms include fever, cough and shortness of breath. Pneumonia is common, but not always present. Gastrointestinal symptoms, including diarrhoea, have also been reported.
Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) is a viral respiratory illness caused by a coronavirus called “Middle East Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus” (MERS-CoV).

**Symptoms**
- Severe acute respiratory illness with symptoms of fever, cough, and shortness of breath
- If you develop these symptoms within 14 days after traveling from countries in the Arabian Peninsula or neighboring countries, see your healthcare provider and mention your recent travel.

**Transmission**
- MERS-CoV has been shown to spread between people who are in close contact.

**5 tips to help prevent respiratory illness**
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for 20 seconds.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze.
- Avoid close contact with sick people.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces.

Source: www.cdc.gov
Approximately 36% of reported patients with MERS have died.
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.
PRECAUTIONARY MEASURES
Consult a health worker if you have fever (38 °C or higher), cough or difficulty breathing. Inform them of your recent travel history.

Avoid close contact with people if you are sick.

Wash your hands regularly with soap and water and maintain good personal hygiene.

Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve when coughing or sneezing.
Johor man first person in Asia to succumb to MERS
by lee yen mun

PUTRAJAYA: The Middle East Respiratory Syndrome-coronavirus (MERS-CoV) has killed its first victim in Asia, a Malaysian man who developed respiratory complications after returning from Morocco.

The 54-year-old man, from Batu Pahat, Johor, had arrived in Malaysia on March 29 after performing the umrah.

He died on April 13 after being admitted to the Hospital Sultanah Nora Ismail for three days, following complaints of fever, cough and breathing difficulties.

Passengers onboard the Turkish Airlines flights TK53 and TK56 on the Jeddah-Istanbul-Kuala Lumpur route on March 29 are urged to contact the Health Ministry for a health screening, said Health Minister Datuk Seri Dr S. Subramaniam.

The MERS-CoV was first detected in the Middle East in 2012, but researchers have yet to determine its cause.

The World Health Organization has recorded 236 cases of the disease and 82 deaths related to the MERS-CoV globally to date.
Filipina nurse from Saudi Arabia tests positive for MERS-CoV – DOH

The Department of Health (DOH) confirmed on Wednesday, Feb 11, the first case of the deadly Middle East respiratory syndrome coronavirus (MERS-CoV).

A 32-year-old Filipina nurse who recently arrived in the country from Saudi Arabia tested positive for the virus.

"May tingin namin na admis na Research Institute for Tropical Medicine (RITM). Ilagay na sa hospital ang labanan na sakit na sinasabing MERS-CoV (A patient was admitted) at RITM. A 32-year-old nurse from Saudi Arabia had fever and episodes of breathing difficulties in a hospital with MERS-CoV," DOH said in a statement.

The nurse, whose name was undisclosed, arrived with her husband via Saudi flight SV660 on Feb 1. She, however, did not have any symptoms by then so the thermal scanners at the airport were not able to detect the virus in her.

A day after her arrival, the nurse started feeling sick so she went to the hospital for a check-up. Following standard operating procedures, the hospital got her specimen and sent it to the Research Institute of Tropical Medicine (RITM).

"According to the nurse, she did not have any contact with any case of MERS-CoV back in Saudi," DOH spokesperson Lyndon Lee Suy said. "But she was working in a health facility so there was a chance that she might have (contracted) a patient [with the virus]."

Two of the tests were released on Feb 9 yielding positive results.

She was then confined on RITM on Tuesday, Feb 10, as the third test result showed that she is positive with the virus.

DOH Undersecretary Nemesis Gato said the health officials are tracking down 224 passengers who rode the same flight as the 32-year-old nurse.

"Testing was done on the patient and yielded positive results. The patient is being watched closely by our doctors and health workers," Gato said adding that the nurse is in a stable condition.

He, however, clarified that the risk of transmission to the passengers of the plane was low since the patient had no symptoms of the virus during the nine-hour flight. For precautionary measures, the DOH appealed to the passengers who came in contact with the nurse to have themselves tested and to undergo a throat swab examination to verify if they acquired MERS-CoV.

"Our appeal, since we already started contract-tracing, is that they don’t make it hard for us to contact them and they are requested to be subjected for testing because we are doing this for their and their families’ protection," Lee Suy said.

The Health department reminded the public of the symptoms of the MERS-CoV including fever, cough, colds and sneezing similar to those of the common flu. The incubation period of the virus is usually 14 days.

The nurse’s husband who did not manifest symptoms was also confined in RITM but in a separate isolation room as a precaution.

Other people who had contact with the patient were also tested but none of them developed the