

## FACT SHEET

### Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS)

#### What is SARS?

SARS is a respiratory illness, caused by a coronavirus, that leads to a severe form of pneumonia. It is thought that SARS originated in China, with emergence into human populations sometime in November 2002. In 2003 the disease spread internationally along major airline routes and resulted in 8,098 SARS cases in 26 countries, with 774 deaths. The last reported case of SARS occurred in China in April 2004 and since then there has been no evidence of SARS coronavirus circulating in human populations.

#### What are the symptoms of SARS?

Symptoms of SARS take 10 days to develop and include fever higher than 38C (100.4F), cough and shortness of breath. Other symptoms may include muscle aches and pains, severe fatigue, severe headache, dry cough, vomiting and diarrhea.

#### How is SARS spread?

SARS is spread through close contact with someone ill with SARS. It is believed the virus is passed through coughing or sneezing. The virus is also present in other body fluids such as saliva, urine and feces, and can spread through objects that the infected person touches. In some cases it is still not certain how SARS is spread.

#### For More Information

Contact the Hastings & Prince Edward Counties Health Unit, Communicable Disease Program, 613-966-5513 x349. Toll free 1-800-267-2803. TTY 613-966-3036.

#### References

1. Heymann, D. L., (2008). *Control of Communicable Diseases Manual*. (19th Ed.). Washington, DC: American Public Health Association.