

Infectious Diseases

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**SARS**



# SARS

SARS stands for Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome. SARS is caused by a virus that infects the lungs. It was first reported in Asia in 2003. Over the next few months, SARS spread to more than 25 countries, infecting more than 8,000 people and killing 774. SARS begins with a high fever, headache, and body aches. Most patients with SARS develop pneumonia (lung infection). SARS is spread through coughing, sneezing, or close contact such as kissing, touching, or sharing food or drinks. During the SARS outbreak, laboratory testing of the virus showed that it was a new strain of a family of viruses called coronaviruses. Coronaviruses have a halo or crown (corona). There is no vaccine for SARS. Public health officials in the United States and around the world continue to monitor this disease closely.