

# County of Riverside ■ Community Health Agency

## Department of Public Health

### Case Definition for Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS)

#### Clinical Criteria

##### *Early Illness*

- Presence of two or more of the following features: fever (might be subjective), chills, rigors, myalgia, headache, diarrhea, sore throat, rhinorrhea.

##### *Mild-to-Moderate Respiratory Illness*

- Temperature of >100.4° F (>38° C) **and**
- One or more clinical findings of lower respiratory illness (e.g., cough shortness of breath or difficulty breathing).

##### *Severe Respiratory Illness*

- Meets clinical criteria of mild-to-moderate respiratory illness, **and**
- One or more of the following findings:
  - Radiographic evidence of pneumonia, **or**
  - Acute respiratory distress syndrome, **or**
  - Autopsy findings consistent with pneumonia or acute respiratory distress syndrome without an identifiable cause.

#### Epidemiologic Criteria

Possible exposure to SARS-associated coronavirus (SARS-CoV)

One or more of the following exposures in the 10 days before onset of symptoms:

- Travel to foreign or domestic location with demented or suspected recent transmission of SARS-CoV **or**
- Close contact with a person with mild-to-moderator or severe respiratory illness and/with history of travel in the 10 days before onset of symptoms of a foreign or domestic location with documented or suspected recent transmission of SARS-CoV

Likely Exposure to SARS-CoV

One or more of the following exposures in the 10 days before onset of symptoms:

- Close contact with a confirmed case of SARS-CoV disease **or**
- Close contact with a person with mild-to-moderate or severe respiratory illness for whom a chain of transmission can be linked to a confirmed case of SARS-CoV disease in the 10 days before onset of symptoms

#### **Reference:**

Department of Health and Human Services  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention as of December 2003.

### *Laboratory Criteria*

Tests to detect SARS-CoV are being refined, and their performance characteristics assessed; therefore, criteria for laboratory diagnosis of SARS-CoV are changing. The following are the general criteria for laboratory confirmation of SARS-CoV:

- Detection of serum antibody to SARS-CoV by a test validated by CDC (e.g., enzyme immunoassay [EIA]), or
- Isolation in cell culture of SARS-CoV from a clinical specimen, or
- Detection of SARS-CoV RNA by a reverse-transcription-polymerase chain reaction (RT-PCR) test validated by CDC and with subsequent confirmation in a reference laboratory (e.g., CDC)

### *SARS-CoV Disease Classification*

- Probable case of SARS-CoV disease; in a person who meets the clinical criteria for severe respiratory illness and the epidemiologic criteria for likely exposure to SARS-CoV
- Confirmed case of SARS-CoV disease; in a person who has a clinically compatible illness (i.e., early, mild-to-moderate, or severe) that is laboratory confirmed.

### *Exclusion Criteria*

A case may be excluded as a SARS Report Under Investigation (SARS RUI), including as a CDC-defined probable SARS CoV case, if any of the following apply:

- An alternative diagnosis can explain the illness fully, **or**
- Antibody to SARS-CoV is undetectable in a serum specimen obtained > 28 days after onset of illness **or**
- The case was reported based on contact with a person who was excluded subsequently as a case of SARS-CoV disease; then the reported case also is excluded, provided other epidemiologic or laboratory criteria are not present.

Please immediately report possible SARS patients to the Disease Control office:

Weekdays, 8:00 AM – 5:00 PM                      **(951) 358-5107**

After Hours, Holidays and Weekends            **(951) 782-2974**

The Public Health Laboratory Director can be reached for question on submission of specimens at **(951) 358-5070**

Updated guidance will be provided as it is received. Information is also available on the CDC website at [www.cdc.gov/ncidod/sars](http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/sars).

#### **Reference:**

Department of Health and Human Services  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention as of December 2003.