

SARS

Definition:

Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) is a viral respiratory disease caused by coronavirus.

Signs and Symptoms:

Symptoms of SARS include: fever, chills, sweats, headache, and body aches. SARS can require mechanical ventilation. Most patients develop pneumonia.

Transmission:

SARS is primarily transmitted by close person-to-person contact. SARS is transmitted most readily by respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes. There is no known SARS transmission anywhere in the world. The most recent human cases of SARS were reported in China in April 2004.

Diagnosis:

SARS is diagnosed by clinical symptoms and laboratory tests. Respiratory specimens, serum and blood samples may be collected for viral and/or bacterial diagnostics.

Role of the School Nurse:

Education

- Federal CDC and world health partners continue to monitor for SARS. During a world outbreak, Maine CDC would require school nurses to monitor and exclude symptomatic students and staff.

Treatment Recommendations

- Symptomatic students and staff should be referred to their primary care providers for treatment.

Exclusions

- Exclude from school students with diagnosed SARS. .

Reporting Requirements

- SARS is reportable by telephone to Maine CDC immediately upon suspicion

Resources:

- Maine CDC SARS website (including fact sheet)
<http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/mecdc/infectious-disease/epi/airborne/sars.shtml>
- Federal CDC SARS website
<http://www.cdc.gov/sars/about/index.html>