

# Infection Prevention and Control Update

Sandra Hensley, MS, RN

B. Hahler, MSN, RN

## Topic: Middle East Respiratory Syndrome

### What is MERS?

Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) is viral respiratory illness first reported in Saudi Arabia in 2012. It is caused by a **coronavirus** called MERS-CoV. Most people who have been confirmed to have MERS-CoV infection developed severe acute respiratory illness. They had fever, cough, and shortness of breath.

So far, all the cases have been linked to countries in or near the Arabian Peninsula. **No cases have been identified in the U.S.** This virus has spread from ill people to others through close contact. However, the virus has not shown to spread in a sustained way in communities. The situation is still evolving.

### When should you suspect MERS?

If a patient develops fever and pneumonia within 14 days after traveling from countries in or near the Arabian Peninsula. Also consider MERS if the patient has had a close contact with symptomatic recent traveler from the the Middle East, who has fever and acute respiratory illness.

### Infection Prevention and Control Measures in the Acute Care Setting

- Airborne Infection Isolation Room
- Hand Hygiene
- Only essential staff should enter room
- Standard precautions
- Airborne precautions
- Contact precautions
- Eye protection is mandatory
- Hand hygiene
- Limit transport of patient outside of room
- Patient must wear mask when outside of room

