

Health Advice for Travellers Going Abroad

Preventing Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS)



Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) is a respiratory tract infection caused by a coronavirus. It can be transmitted by respiratory droplets. While SARS is being contained in various cities of the world, it is essential that we remain vigilant and take precautionary measures as appropriate. The Department of Health has formulated the following health advice for travelers going abroad. Please pay attention to these precautionary measures for the protection of your health and the health of others.

The following people are advised not to travel:

1. People who feel unwell, especially people who have a fever; or
2. People who have been in close contact with suspected or confirmed SARS patients during the last 10 days. (Close contact means having cared for, having lived with, or having had contact with the respiratory secretions or bodily fluids of an infected person.)

Before the Trip

Find out the Dos and Don'ts

- Study the guidelines (Health Advice for Travellers Going Abroad) thoroughly before the trip.

Bring the Following Items

- Some useful items such as tissue paper and masks for use when necessary.
- A disinfectant containing 65–95% alcohol for hand cleaning and disinfection when hand washing facilities are not available.
- Telephone number of the Consulate of China (or relevant country) in your destination.

Travel Insurance

- Travellers are advised to purchase suitable travel insurance to cover emergency medical expenses.

During the Trip

Health Checks at Border Points

- Cooperate with port health authorities and follow instructions given by the tour leader and tour guide. Comply with all necessary immigration procedures and health checks.

No Littering or Spitting

- Put rubbish in a rubbish bin. Use a tissue paper to hold your spit and discard it into a bin with a lid.

Wash Hands Frequently

- Keep hands clean at all times. Wash hands with liquid soap after going to the toilet, before meals or handling food, and after touching public installations or equipment. Avoid touching the eyes, nose and mouth. If unavoidable, wash hands before touching them. If hand washing facilities are not available, clean hands with a disinfectant containing alcohol.

Have Tissue Paper Handy

- Have tissue paper handy. Cover your mouth and nose with tissue paper or a handkerchief when sneezing or coughing.

Do not share towels or personal items

- To prevent spread of infection, do not share towels or personal items.

Have Masks Handy

- Have masks handy and put one on when you or fellow travellers develop symptoms of a respiratory tract infection.

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Serving Utensils

- Use serving chopsticks and spoons at meal times. Do not share lunch boxes or drinks.

A Healthy Lifestyle

- Maintain healthy lifestyle practices throughout the trip. Observe good personal hygiene and do not smoke.

If Feeling Unwell

Consult the Doctor Promptly

- If you feel unwell, especially if you have a fever,
 - Inform hotel staff and the tour leader/tour guide;
 - You and your carers should put on a mask immediately;
 - Arrange for medical treatment at once;
 - Rest in the hotel room and postpone your trip until you have fully recovered.
- Travellers from Hong Kong who are suspected or confirmed to have SARS and required to be hospitalized for further investigation or treatment while abroad, should call the Department of Health's hotline at (852) 187 2222 at once.

Fellow Travellers

- Fellow travellers should avoid unnecessary contact with the sick group member, follow advice given by a local doctor and pay meticulous attention to personal hygiene.
- If the sick member is confirmed or suspected to have SARS, fellow

travellers should comply with instructions given by the local health and quarantine authorities on arrangements for the rest of the trip and any necessary quarantine measures.

After the Trip

Watch out for Symptoms

- If you develop symptoms of an infection such as fever and diarrhoea within 14 days after the trip, consult a doctor promptly and provide details of your recent travel to facilitate accurate diagnosis.

Support Services

- For Hong Kong residents who encounter entry or exit difficulties on quarantine grounds while abroad, they can call Department of Health's Port Health 24-hour hotline (852) 8103 1717 or Immigration Department's 24-hour hotline (852) 2829 3010.

Health Information for Travellers

- Travellers seeking health information may call the Hong Kong Department of Health's Travel Health Centre at 2961 8840 or 2150 7235, or visit the Department of Health's Hong Kong Traveller's Health Service website at <http://www.info.gov.hk/trhealth>.
- For information on SARS, please call the Department of Health's SARS hotline at 187 2222 or visit the Department of Health's website at <http://www.dh.gov.hk>.

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