

# Health Advice for Tour Leaders and Tour Guides

## Operating Overseas Tours

### Preventing Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS)



衛生署  
Department of Health

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 guidelines for tour leaders and tour guides operating overseas tours. They are urged to take the following precautionary measures to safeguard their health as well as that of fellow travellers.

Tour leaders and tour guides are key persons for members of the tour group when traveling overseas. They provide the best of services to make their group members feel at home and take care of their health during the trip. A tour leader or tour guide should therefore cease reception of travellers if he/she experiences the following:

1. Feeling unwell, especially having a fever; or
2. Having 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**

- Check with the consulate for any health advice or travel advisory imposed at the destination. Inform group members and make suitable arrangements in advance if necessary.

- Prepare the following:
  - A list of clinics, doctors and hospitals at the destination;
  - Some useful items such as tissue paper, masks, thermometers and vomit bags for members' use when necessary;
  - A disinfectant containing 65 – 95% alcohol for hand cleaning and disinfection when hand washing facilities are not available;
  - Telephone numbers of family members of the group.
  - Telephone number of the Consulate of China (or relevant country) in the destination.

#### **During the Trip**

##### **Restaurants**

- Patronize reputable and hygienic restaurants which provide liquid soap and hand washing facilities.
- Request for serving chopsticks and spoons.

##### **The Tour Coach**

- Arrange an appropriate coach for the size of group to avoid overcrowding inside the coach.

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- The driver should clean the interior of the coach every time before and after carrying tourists.
  - For general purpose, cleanse with a 1:99 diluted household bleach solution.
  - If the interior is contaminated with bodily secretions, e.g. vomitus, disinfect with a 1:49 diluted household bleach solution.
- Inspect the air conditioning system frequently to ensure good ventilation.
- Make vomit bags and tissue paper available for members' use.

#### Health Advice for Group Members

- Request members to cooperate with port health authorities and comply with all necessary immigration procedures and health checks.
- Remind members to observe good personal and environmental hygiene:
  - Put rubbish in a rubbish bin. Use a tissue paper to hold their spit and discard it into a bin with a lid.
  - 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 and cover the mouth and nose with tissue paper/a handkerchief when sneezing or coughing.
  - Have masks handy and put one on when the members themselves or any member of the tour group develops symptoms of a respiratory tract infection.
  - To prevent spread of infection, do not share towels or personal items.
  - Use serving chopsticks and spoons at meal times. Do not share lunch boxes or drinks.
  - Maintain healthy lifestyle practices throughout the trip. Observe good personal hygiene and do not smoke.
- Remind members to watch out for changes in health condition after the trip. If they develop symptoms of an infection such as fever or diarrhoea within 14 days after the trip, they should consult a doctor promptly and provide details of their recent travel to facilitate accurate diagnosis.
  - Provide the following information to members for use in case of any discomfort or emergency:

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- The name, room number and telephone number of the tour leader/tour guide;
- Telephone number of the hotel's reception desk.

#### **If a Group Member Feels Unwell**

- The tour leader/tour guide should assist the sick group member in body temperature checking.
- If body temperature of the sick member is 37.5°C (99.5°F) or above:
  - The sick member and his/her carers should put on a mask immediately;
  - Arrange for medical treatment at once.
- Seek medical advice on whether the sick member could continue travelling with other members of the group. If required, the tour members should follow the instructions given by the local health authorities.
- If the sick member is suspected to have SARS and is required to be hospitalized for investigation, the tour leader/tour guide should immediately call the Hong Kong Department of Health's hotline at (852) 187 2222.
- If the sick member does not have a fever but has other discomforts, it is still necessary to arrange for medical treatment.

#### **After the Trip**

- Keep personal information and telephone numbers of the group members for at least 2 weeks to facilitate Department of Health's investigation if required.

#### **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) 28293010.

#### **Health Information for Travellers**

- For health information for travellers, please call the Department of Health's Travel Health Centre at 2961 8840 or 2150 7235, or visit the Department of Health's 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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