

## 2018 Hajj and MERS coronavirus (MERS-CoV) Update

*Information for Emergency Departments, High Dependency and Respiratory Units*

- Always obtain a **recent travel history** from febrile patients
- **Consider MERS-CoV infection** in patients with acute pneumonia/pneumonitis  
**AND** a history of travel in the Middle East in the previous 14 days
- **Isolate suspect cases** and use standard and transmission-based precautions
- **Report suspect cases immediately to your local Public Health Unit – 1300 066 055**

### Update

- The 2018 Hajj pilgrimage in Saudi Arabia will be from **19-24 August**  
Many Australians attend each year and they will be returning in the next few weeks
- MERS-CoV cases and hospital outbreaks continue to be reported in the Arabian Peninsula, particularly in Saudi Arabia
- Importation of a MERS-CoV case into Australia could lead to a major hospital outbreak
- WHO advises that early detection and appropriate infection control practices can prevent hospital outbreaks.

### Consider MERS-CoV in patients who develop pneumonia / pneumonitis within 14 days of:

- travelling in countries in the Middle East – particularly Saudi Arabia **OR**
- close contact with an acutely ill traveller from the Middle East.

### Test patients

- Seek urgent advice from an ID physician & local laboratory prior to collecting samples
- Testing for MERS-CoV is available at NSWHP-ICPMR and NSWHP-Randwick
- Use infection control precautions when collecting samples for testing (see below)
- Also test for other causes of community-acquired pneumonia and respiratory viruses.

### Infection control

- Isolate suspect cases in a single room with negative pressure air-handling (if available)
- Use standard and transmission-based precautions (contact and airborne), including using a P2 mask, disposable gown, gloves and eye protection when entering a patient care area.

### Treat patients

- Seek specialist infectious disease advice.

### Further information:

- NSW Health MERS-CoV info (inc. links to Travel Alert Posters for patient waiting areas):  
[www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/alerts/Pages/MERS-Alerts.aspx](http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/alerts/Pages/MERS-Alerts.aspx) ,
- WHO MERS-CoV info and resources: [www.who.int/emergencies/mers-cov/en/](http://www.who.int/emergencies/mers-cov/en/) .



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