



Triage of Patients Who May Have Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS): Interim Guidance for Screening in Ambulatory Care Settings

To facilitate identification of patients who may have SARS in ambulatory care settings, targeted screening questions concerning fever, respiratory symptoms, and recent travel should be included at triage or as soon as possible after patient arrival; the most recent case definition for SARS, accessible at <http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/sars/casedefinition.htm>, should be used as a basis for such screening questions. Healthcare personnel who are the first points of contact should be trained for SARS screening; in the absence of systematic triage, providers caring for patients in ambulatory care settings should perform such screening before close contact.

A surgical mask should be placed on patients in whom SARS is suspected, and contact (e.g., gloves, gown, and eye protection) and airborne precautions (e.g., an isolation room with negative pressure relative to the surrounding area and use of an N-95 filtering disposable respirator, or respirators of equivalent filtering efficiency, for persons entering the room) should be applied where feasible. Where respirators are not available, healthcare personnel evaluating and caring for suspect SARS patients should wear a surgical mask. Additional guidance regarding SARS infection control in the ambulatory care setting is available at <http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/sars/infectioncontrol.htm>.