



May 12, 2014  
**MERS update**

Dear Airline Cabin Crew:

On May 2, 2014, CDC announced the first case of Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) in the United States, confirmed in Indiana. On May 11, a second case was confirmed in Florida. Both patients traveled by air to the United States from Saudi Arabia, but on different flights. CDC is working with vital partners at U.S. international ports of entry, including airlines, to enhance awareness and surveillance of MERS. With this letter, CDC is sharing information and providing details on how airline crew can help.

MERS originated in the Arabian Peninsula in 2012. To date, most cases of MERS have had a direct or indirect connection to countries within and near the Arabian Peninsula. Countries with confirmed cases are updated at [www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/mers/index.html](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/mers/index.html).

#### About MERS

- MERS is a severe, contagious respiratory illness that can cause death but is NOT very common. It has NOT spread easily from person to person. Most person-to-person spread has occurred in health care workers and other close contacts (such as family members and caregivers) of people sick with MERS.
- At this time, not much is known about MERS transmission, especially during a flight. We are closely monitoring the MERS situation globally to understand the risks of MERS to the public's health. Investigations of the first two U.S. cases will help to better understand transmission.

**Symptoms of MERS include fever, cough or shortness of breath.** No vaccine is available for MERS. Follow your company's protocol for personal protection and infection control and refer to [Infection Control Guidelines for Cabin Crew on Aircraft](#).

**What you can do to help:** Please report to CDC any ill travelers with possible MERS symptoms arriving from countries in and near the Arabian Peninsula. Your vigilance is important. See [MERS Guidance for Airline Crew](#). To report to CDC, refer to [Reporting Onboard Deaths and Illnesses: A Tool for Cabin Crew](#).

**For more information:** This is an evolving situation and information may change quickly. Refer to the CDC [Travelers' Health](#) and [MERS](#) websites for updates.

Thank you for your support,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "NP", written over a white background.

Nicki Pesik, MD  
Chief, Quarantine and Border Health Services Branch  
Division of Global Migration and Quarantine  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention