The Ashe Center’s Infection Control & Safety Committee continues to monitor the current outbreak of the Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS). The following are guidelines that apply to students planning travel to, or are returning from North Korea, South Korea, and the Arabian Peninsula and procedures for monitoring travelers’ health upon returning to or visiting UCLA.

The Middle East Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus (MERS-CoV) is the virus that causes the respiratory illness known as MERS, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The virus is likely to have originated in animals, having been detected in camels in several countries. The first reports of humans having contracted the MERS-CoV virus emerged in 2012 in Saudi Arabia. Presently, there is no known cure or vaccine to stop the virus.

MERS is not a worldwide threat, according to healthcare experts. The virus can only spread between people in hospitals and can be controlled by public-health measures. Like many other coronaviruses, MERS-CoV tends to spread from an infected person’s respiratory secretions, like coughing. Close contact, such as living with an infected person, is also likely to spread infection. According to the World Health Organization, people with diabetes, renal failure, and chronic lung disease are considered to be at high risk of severe disease from MERS-CoV infection.

As of June 16, 153 cases in the Republic of Korea have been confirmed by the World Health Organization. All transmission has been linked to health care facilities where MERS patients were treated. However, CDC does not recommend that Americans change their travel plans because of MERS. The current CDC travel notice is a Watch (Level 1) and reminds travelers to practice usual precautions.

Cases of MERS have been identified in multiple countries in the Arabian Peninsula. Two cases were confirmed in May 2014 among two health care workers living in Saudi Arabia who were visiting the United States. CDC does not recommend that travelers change their plans because of MERS. Most instances of person-to-person spread have occurred in health care workers and other close contacts (such as family members and caregivers) of people sick with MERS. The current CDC travel notice for the Arabian Peninsula is an Alert (Level 2) and provides special precautions for travelers.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

For all individuals planning travel to, or are returning from, North Korea, South Korea, and the Arabian Peninsula:

1. All travelers can take these everyday actions to help prevent the spread of germs and protect against colds, flu, and other illnesses:
   - Wash your hands often with soap and water. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
   - Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
   - Avoid close contact with sick people.
   - Be sure you are up-to-date with all of your shots and, if possible, see your health care provider at least 4–6 weeks before travel to get any additional shots.

2. If you are sick:
   - Cover your mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze, and throw the tissue in the trash.
   - Avoid contact with other people to keep from infecting them.
   - Contact your doctor if you develop a fever and symptoms of respiratory illness, such as cough or shortness of breath, within 14 days after being in a health care facility in the Republic of Korea. Tell your doctor about your recent travel and presence in a health care facility before you go in for an appointment.

3. Prior to entering the UCLA campus:
   - Individuals returning from travel to countries with community spread of MERS (North Korea, South Korea and the Arabian Peninsula) may contact the appropriate on-campus Health Center staff for consultation.
   - UCLA Students: Contact The Ashe Center at 310-825-4073
   - UCLA Faculty and Staff: Contact Occupational Health Services at 310-825-6771
   - After Hours and Visitors: Contact a local health care provider or the Ronald Reagan UCLA Medical Center Emergency Department at (310) 825-2111

**NOTE:** This advisory will be updated as new information becomes available. Please check back periodically.

Last Updated: June 18, 2015