

**Mission:**

To protect, promote & improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county & community efforts.



**Rick Scott**  
Governor

**John H. Armstrong, MD, FACS**  
State Surgeon General & Secretary

**Vision:** To be the **Healthiest State** in the Nation

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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**Contact:** DOH Communications  
(850) 245-4111

### **HEALTH OFFICIALS CONFIRM FIRST MERS-CoV CASE IN FLORIDA**

*Florida Department of Health working with CDC and Hospital Officials*

- **Questions from the Central Florida media will be addressed this afternoon by health officials and hospital representatives at the office of the Florida Department of Health in Orange County located at 6101 Lake Ellenor Drive, Orlando.**
- **The information line for the public at the Florida Department of Health in Orange County is 407-858-1490.**
- **Information from the CDC for the public is available by calling 800-232-4636.**

**Tallahassee –** The Florida Department of Health today confirmed the first Florida case of Middle East Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus (MERS-CoV) infection in a patient at an Orlando hospital.

“The Florida Department of Health is working closely with hospital officials and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to ensure appropriate care of the patient and protect the health of all residents and visitors in Florida,” said Dr. John Armstrong, State Surgeon General and Secretary of Health. “There is no broad risk to the health of the general public.”

“The Florida Department of Health in Orange County is taking all necessary steps to protect and inform the public,” said Dr. Kevin Sherin, Director for the Florida Department of Health in Orange County. “Our office has set up an information line to address any questions and we will continue to work closely with the hospital to ensure the safety of our community.”

“The patient is in good condition and is improving,” said Antonio Crespo, MD, Infectious Disease Specialist and Chief Quality Officer for Dr. P. Phillips Hospital. “We are taking every precaution, but believe the risk of transmission from this patient is very low since his symptoms were mild and he was not coughing when he arrived at the hospital.”

The patient is visiting the United States from Saudi Arabia. The patient first flew to London and then through Boston and Atlanta, arriving in Orlando on May 1. The patient was hospitalized on May 9 and was placed in isolation once MERS-CoV was suspected. Efforts are underway to make contact with any individuals who had close contact with the patient during travel or in the Orlando area. The patient remains in stable condition and is receiving appropriate care.

MERS-CoV infection is a viral respiratory illness that was first reported in Saudi Arabia in 2012. MERS-CoV transmission has occurred in hospital settings, but there is no evidence of sustained spread in communities. How the virus emerged is unknown. There is no available vaccine or specific treatment for the virus.

Symptoms of MERS-CoV are similar to those of the flu and include:

- Congestion

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**Florida Department of Health**

Office of Communications  
4052 Bald Cypress Way, Bin A-04 • Tallahassee, FL 32399-1705  
PHONE: 850/245-4111 • FAX 850/488-6495

**www.FloridaHealth.gov**

TWITTER: HealthyFLA  
FACEBOOK: FLDepartmentofHealth  
YOUTUBE: fldoh

- Cough
- Fever over 100.4
- Shortness of breath
- Pneumonia
- Body aches
- Diarrhea

MERS-CoV is a reminder of the precautions that everyone can take to protect themselves, their families, and their communities from any communicable diseases:

- 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. Germs spread this way.
- Stay at home when you are sick, and avoiding close contact with sick people.

For more information, please visit the following websites:

- Middle East Respiratory Syndrome: <http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/mers/index.html>
- About Coronavirus: <http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/about/index.html>
- Frequently Asked MERS Questions and Answers: <http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/mers/faq.html>

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