SARS-CoV1 or “SARS”

*Research provided by the Kansas Association of Local Health Departments*

***What Is It?***

Like COVID-19, SARS stands for severe acute respiratory syndrome and is a strain of Coronavirus that is an enveloped, single strand RNA virus which effects the lungs. It enters the body through binding to cells through enzymes. The strain can affect humans, bats, and other mammals including pets. There are many different strains of Coronavirus, including the one that causes the common cold. Symptoms of the SARS virus include cough, sore throat, fever, and loss of taste or smell.

SARS strain coronaviruses typically spread to humans from animals (such as bats) through infected animals and bad hygiene in close quarters. Many attributes China’s wet market culture for the spread of coronaviruses. SARS can be spread through human-to-human contact including sneezing, coughing, and respiratory droplets spread in the air. Coronavirus can be prevented similarly to other viral diseases.

***History***

Discovered in China in November 2002, Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) effected both mainland China and areas of Hong Kong. The outbreak quickly spread to healthcare workers and the food industry. By February of 2003, China reported 405 cases of SARS, including 105 healthcare workers. China kept information about the epidemic private, discouraging press from reporting on it and going as far to delay reporting to the World Health Organization. This provided many conspiracies that have followed during the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic. While the virus did not have a vaccine, the outbreak slowed to 3 or more cases a week by May 2004 and was no longer a threat.

In 2016, the WHO identified SARS related coronaviruses as a likely cause for future epidemics and urged research for testing and vaccination. However, due to the difficultly of vaccine development for mRNA vaccination, it was not a priority due to the Ebola outbreak.

***Vaccination***

Current COVID-19 mRNA vaccinations prevent both SARS-CoV 1 and SARS-Cov 2 (Pfizer and Moderna). This vaccine has been in development for over 20 years due to research for other viral diseases. The mRNA vaccination gives the body instructions on building the protein needed to ward off cell-binding enzymes. mRNA vaccines are much safer and more effective than traditional vaccines.

Sources

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