

Two US hospital workers test negative for MERS

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Two healthcare workers at a Florida hospital that is caring for a Saudi patient with the dangerous MERS virus have tested negative for the illness, the hospital said Wednesday.

The two were "showing symptoms," Dr. P. Phillips Hospital in Orlando said on Tuesday. One was hospitalized and the other was treated and discharged.

But on Wednesday, a spokesman said they "have tested negative."

Eighteen other [healthcare workers](#) who came in contact with the patient have also been tested for the virus but those results have not yet been released, the hospital said in a statement.

Symptoms of MERS can include fever, chills, cough and in serious cases, [kidney failure](#).

Health authorities say it is transmissible mainly through close person-to-person contact and in healthcare settings.

The United States has announced two confirmed cases of MERS, or Middle East Respiratory Syndrome, which originated in Saudi Arabia and has since spread to more than a dozen countries.

The first patient, who fell ill in April, has been discharged from a hospital in Indiana.

The second patient is still in isolation at Dr. P. Phillips hospital in Orlando, has been fever-free for 24 hours and is "doing well," the hospital said.

Meanwhile the World Health Organization said there is no global emergency over MERS, and that the virus does not seem to be increasing in transmissibility, despite a rising number of cases in recent weeks.

A total of 571 MERS cases have been reported to the WHO, of which 171 have proved fatal. In many of them, victims caught the virus in hospital from other patients, although experts believe camels may also spread the disease.

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