

Stalking SARS: CDC at Work

[Announcer] This program is brought to you by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

[Karmen] Hi kids! Welcome to CDC Kidtastics Radio! I'm Karmen Kidtastic. Today, we're talking about an outbreak of an unknown disease that happened 10 years ago and how CDC helped solve the mystery!

[Chris] The disease was first reported in Asia in February 2003 when several people were sick with an unusual pneumonia. They had high fevers, headaches, body aches, and other symptoms, but no one knew the cause. Around the same time, people in Hong Kong got sick with similar symptoms.

[Karmen] Were the cases in China and Hong Kong the same disease?

[Chris] No one knew, but scientists around the world kept trying to figure it out.

[Karmen] Disease detectives from the CDC worked with the World Health Organization and investigators from countries where the disease was spreading.

[Chris] Eventually, the mysterious disease was given a name: Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome, or SARS.

[Karmen] About 8,100 people in 29 countries got the disease. Most of them developed pneumonia and needed to be hospitalized. Nearly 800 people with SARS died. Most of those who got the disease were in China.

[Chris] People who had SARS spread the disease when they coughed, sneezed, or had close contact with other people. Doctors had to wear special breathing masks and sometimes full-body protection to prevent getting SARS from their patients.

[Karmen] The SARS outbreak was tragic, but the good news is that the disease is no longer a threat anywhere in the world. That's because scientists and health professionals around the globe worked together to identify and stop SARS in July 2003.

[Chris] Whew! It was a great success. Now, CDC is always ready to take on the next new mysterious illness!

[Karmen] Thanks for listening to CDC Kidtastics Radio. We'll talk to you again soon. Until then... be a safer, healthier kid!!

[Announcer] For more health information, go to cdc.gov or call 1-800-CDC-INFO.