



Novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV)

Information for Close Contacts of a Confirmed Case

You have been identified as having had close contact with someone diagnosed with 2019 novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV). Someone from your local public health unit will be in contact with you daily while you are at risk of infection to monitor you for symptoms. Please read this information carefully.

What is this virus?

Coronaviruses can make humans and animals sick. Some coronaviruses can cause illness similar to the common cold and others can cause more serious diseases, including Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) and Middle East respiratory syndrome (MERS).

The virus was first detected in Wuhan, China. It is called a 'novel' virus because it is new, and has not been detected before this outbreak.

How is the virus spread?

Most people infected live in, or travelled to, Wuhan, China. There have been some cases of 2019-nCoV reported in other Chinese provinces and other countries. It is likely that the virus originally came from an animal, and there is now evidence that it can spread from person-to-person.

The virus is most likely to spread from person-to-person through:

- direct contact with a person whilst they are infectious
- contact with droplets when a person with a confirmed infection coughs or sneezes; or
- touching objects or surfaces (such as door knobs or tables) that were contaminated by droplets from secretions coughed or sneezed from a person with a confirmed infection, and then touching your mouth or face.

Close contacts of a person with a confirmed infection (such as people staying in the same house or sharing a closed space for a prolonged length of time) are most at risk of infection.

At present, the infection is not known to have spread efficiently person-to-person outside of China. However, it is important that you understand the symptoms of novel coronavirus and seek medical attention if you become unwell.

What are the symptoms?

Symptoms can include (but are not limited to) fever, cough, fatigue, sore throat, and/or shortness of breath.

For how long can a person spread the infection to other people?

The length of time that a person is infectious, that is, can spread the infection to others, is not yet known. However, it is likely that a person can spread the infection from the time that they first develop symptoms until up to 1 day after their symptoms stop.

Who is most at risk of a serious illness?

Some people who are infected may not get sick at all, some will get mild symptoms from which they will recover easily, and others may become very ill, very quickly.

From previous experience with other coronaviruses, the people at most risk of serious infection are:

- people with compromised immune systems;
- elderly people;
- very young children and babies; and
- people with diagnosed heart and lung conditions.

What do I do if I develop symptoms?

If you develop a fever, sweats, or chills:

- Call a doctor or a hospital and inform them that you are a contact of a confirmed case of novel coronavirus;
- Put on a mask if you have one for if you need to leave the house; and
- When you arrive at the doctor's surgery or hospital, tell them again that you are a contact of a confirmed case of novel coronavirus.
- If you are experiencing severe symptoms, such as shortness of breath:
- Call 000 and request an ambulance, and
- Inform the ambulance officers that you have been in contact with someone with a confirmed case of novel coronavirus.

How is the virus treated?

There is no specific treatment for 2019-nCoV. Antibiotics are not effective against viruses. Most of the symptoms can be treated with supportive medical care.

How can we help prevent the spread of the virus?

Practising good hand and sneeze/cough hygiene is the best defence:

- wash your hands often with soap and water before and after eating as well as after attending the toilet;
- avoid contact with others; and
- cough and sneeze into your elbow.

Should I wear a face mask?

Face masks are not recommended if you do not have symptoms. A facemask will not protect you against becoming infected. If you are ill, you should put on a mask if you have one to prevent spreading the infection to others. You will be given a mask to wear by your doctor.

Where can I get more information?

Visit the Australian Government Department of Health homepage at www.health.gov.au

Call the Public Health Information Line on 1800 044 599

Discuss any questions you have with the Public Health Unit monitoring you.

Contact your state or territory public health agency:

- ACT call 02 5124 9213.
- NSW call 1300 066 055
- NT call 08 8922 8044.
- Qld call 13HEALTH (13 43 25 84)
- SA call 1300 232 272
- Tas call 1800 671 738
- Vic call 1300 651 160