

Novel coronavirus – what you need to know

What is novel coronavirus?

The novel coronavirus is a new virus recently detected in Hubei Province, China. Most people infected with the virus live in or travelled to Hubei Province. A small number of cases have been diagnosed outside of China, including in Australia.

What are the symptoms?

Symptoms may include fever, cough, sore throat, tiredness and shortness of breath. Anyone who has recently been in China, particularly Hubei Province, should be alert for these symptoms. It can take up to 14 days for symptoms to show after a person has been infected.

Should I send my child to school?

You should NOT send your child to school or childcare if:

- They have been in contact with any confirmed novel coronavirus case they should not attend school or childcare and remain isolated in their homes for 14 days following exposure;
- They have recently visited Hubei Province in China they should not attend school or childcare and remain isolated in their homes for 14 days after leaving Hubei Province; and
- They have departed mainland China and arrived in Australia on or after the 1st of February they should not attend school or childcare and remain isolated in their homes for 14 days after leaving China.
- If they arrived in Australia from mainland China (other than Hubei Province) before 1 February they can attend school or childcare, as long as they are well.

Any unwell child should also not attend school or childcare.

Should I come to work?

The above advice to remain at home for 14 days applies to any person who has been in contact with a confirmed case or recently visited mainland China.

What does 'isolated and remain at home' mean?

This means a person must not attend a public place, particularly work, school, childcare or university. Only people who live in the household should be in the home – no visitors.

If a person who requires isolation must leave the home, such as to seek medical care, a surgical face mask must be worn.

What do I do if my child (or myself) is sick now or within 14 days of being in mainland China?

If you or your child have recently returned from mainland China and novel coronavirus is suspected, please call your GP or the Public Health Hotline on 1800 671 738 to speak to a Clinical Nurse Consultant. They will ask you questions and provide advice about next steps.

If serious symptoms develop, such as shortness of breath, call 000 and ask for an ambulance. Inform the paramedics of your recent travel. If novel coronavirus is suspected, tests will need to be done. Your doctor and Public Health will provide you with advice on managing the condition.

What do I do if I have a student or staff member who is sick now or within 14 days of being in mainland China?

If they have returned from mainland China on or after the 1st of February the person should remain in isolation in a room away from others. For students, the parent/guardian should be contacted immediately and told to arrange an urgent medical review.

The parent/guardian or staff member should call the GP or the Public Health Hotline on 1800 671 738 to speak to a Clinical Nurse Consultant.

If serious symptoms develop, such as shortness of breath, call 000 and ask for an ambulance. Paramedics should be informed of their recent travel.

How can I help prevent the spread of virus and seasonal illness?

Practicing good hygiene is the best defence against most viruses. This includes:

- Washing hands regularly, including after using the toilet and before eating
- Covering mouth and nose when coughing/sneezing (with a flexed elbow or tissue, not hands)
- Disposing of any used tissues in the bin and washing hands afterwards
- Avoiding close contact with anyone who has a fever or cough

Where should I go for up-to-date information?

For the latest information, visit the Australian Department of Health website at www.health.gov.au

The Department of Education will also continue to monitor the situation and will provide updated information as it becomes available.

Who do I contact with concerns?

If you have questions about novel coronavirus, contact the Tasmanian Public Health Hotline on 1800 671 738.