

Novel Coronavirus 2019

Updated advice for General Practitioners

1. Consider novel coronavirus 2019 infection in patients **with respiratory symptoms and travel to or transit through mainland China (excluding Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan) in the 14 days before illness onset**
2. If patients report respiratory symptoms within 14 days of travel to mainland China, **arrange for testing. Testing is now available through your usual pathology provider**
3. People who have travelled in Hubei Province or had contact with a case must be quarantined at home for 14 days from last contact or date of departure. **Additionally people who left mainland China, including transit passengers, on or after 1 February must self-isolate for 14 days after departing China.**

Situation update (**new information in red**):

- Most 2019-nCoV cases have been in China, mainly in Hubei Province **but increasingly in other provinces.**
- Infection can cause severe acute respiratory illnesses, but there is a spectrum of disease. **Some confirmed cases have no history of fever and no fever at presentation, but it is not known how commonly this occurs.**
- There is preliminary evidence of a very small number of people being infectious before their symptoms developed, but it is not known how commonly this occurs.

Consider 2019-nCoV infection in people with:

- History of travel in, or transit through, mainland China (excluding Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan) in the 14 days before illness onset, **OR** contact with a confirmed case of 2019-nCoV

AND

- Acute respiratory infection (with at least one of the following symptoms: shortness of breath, cough or sore throat) with or without fever

For a patient who meets these criteria:

- Patients are encouraged to call their GP, Emergency Department or healthdirect (1800 022 222) for advice before attending. If a patient calls you:
 - ask if they have travelled to, or transited through, mainland China (excluding Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan) and if they have any respiratory symptoms.
 - if they report the above travel and symptoms, arrange further assessment and testing.
 - see the patient yourself for assessment and testing (see below for infection control requirements), or refer to your local Emergency Department.
- If a **patient with a history of travel to mainland China in the previous 14 days presents to you without calling:**
 - ask the patient to wear a surgical mask and move them to a separate room
 - use standard, contact and droplet transmission precautions, including a surgical mask, disposable gown, gloves when entering the room (additional precautions needed if collecting a specimen, see below)
 - phone your Public Health Unit (1300 066 055) if you need further information

Arrange testing:

- Testing of specimens for 2019-nCoV is now available through private pathology providers.
- You may take samples yourself if you use airborne infection control procedures (a P2/N95 mask, disposable gown, gloves, and eye protection). If the patient coughs while the sample is being taken the room should be cleaned but not used for patient consultation for at least 30 minutes.
- Recommended specimens are:
 - two combined nose and throat viral swabs, or nasopharyngeal viral swabs
 - lower respiratory specimen (sputum) if obtainable
- **If appropriate PPE is not available** refer patients to your usual pathology collection centre and request 2019-nCoV testing and screening for routine respiratory pathogens.

- All requests for 2019-nCoV testing **MUST** include the indication for testing, including the patient's travel and/or contact history and respiratory symptoms/signs.
- As for all other pathology test requests, you are responsible for informing the patient about their test results.

Advice to patients about home isolation

- Advise the patient that they must wear a surgical mask and self-isolate at home until they have received their 2019-nCoV test result.
- **Patients** who are contacts of confirmed cases and people who have travelled to Hubei Province must **continue to** isolate themselves at home for 14 days following last contact or date of departure from Hubei, irrespective of their 2019-nCoV test result.
- Patients who left mainland China (excluding Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan), including transit passengers, on or after 1 February must also continue to self-isolate for 14 days after departing China irrespective of their 2019-nCoV test result.
- Provide the patient with information on home isolation:
<https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/factsheets/Pages/advice-for-suspected-confirmed.aspx>

Further information: <https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/diseases/Pages/coronavirus.aspx>



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