

What is the Novel Coronavirus?

Coronaviruses (CoV) are a large family of viruses that cause illness, ranging from the common cold to more severe diseases such as Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS-CoV) and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS-CoV). A novel coronavirus (nCoV) is a new strain that has not been previously identified in humans.

Common signs of infection include respiratory symptoms, fever, cough, shortness of breath and breathing difficulties. In more severe cases, infection can cause pneumonia, severe acute respiratory syndrome, kidney failure and even death.

Please note as information emerges, health advice, outbreak news and general updates will be issued by relevant authorities. To stay up-to-date, please monitor the [World Health Organisation](#) and the [Centre of Disease Control](#).

Advice

Pre-deployment

- Before you go ensure vaccinations and disease prophylaxis are up-to-date. See here: [Fit For Travel](#).
- Do not travel if you are sick. Note that some locations have implemented screening and travellers may face quarantine and testing.
- Family members can become stressed about such deployments. Have a discussion with them about the risks and transmission concerns. If necessary set up conversations between family members and your organisation's medical advisers.
- Do not commission local reporters to gain footage of markets/farms without ensuring the correct hygiene measures are in place and being observed.

On site

- Standard recommendations to prevent infection spread include regular hand washing, and covering the mouth and nose when coughing and sneezing. Use anti-bacterial gel or wipes before leaving site; and wash hands with soap and hot water as soon as possible.
- Avoid close contact with anyone showing symptoms of respiratory illness such as coughing and sneezing.
- Only consume thoroughly cooked meat and eggs.
- When traveling, maintain flexible itineraries accounting for the additional time required for health and temperature screening at airports, railway stations, docks and long-haul bus stations. Arrive early at transport hubs.

- Follow the local health authorities guidance and instructions.
- Do not visit wet markets or farms in affected areas. Avoid direct contact with animals (live or dead) and their environment. Do not touch surfaces that may be contaminated with droppings.
- Seek medical attention if you develop symptoms, especially fever or shortness of breath.
- If you are operating in a market/farm outside the affected areas, never place broadcast equipment on the floor. Always decontaminate equipment with fast acting antimicrobial wipes such as Meliseptol.
- If working in an affected market, good practice includes ensuring footwear is either disposable or waterproof overshoes. They must be wiped/rinsed off as you exit the location. Overshoes should be disposed of before leaving the scene – always follow local guidance.
- Avoid proximity by entering a pen, or cage of large/unpredictable animals. In the event that you are bitten by an animal seek medical advice as soon as possible.
- Never eat or drink while touching animals, or in the proximity of the market/farm.
- Always ensure your hands are washed thoroughly with hot water and soap after leaving an affected area.
- As more information becomes clear, further personal protective equipment may be required.

After leaving

- Monitor your personal health upon leaving the affected areas or any markets/farms. Seek medical attention if you develop respiratory symptoms within 14 days of return, informing the health service prior to attendance about the recent travel/exposure.
- Inform your management team.
- Monitor the latest information on the virus, as well as any quarantine and isolation procedures being implemented at both your origin and your destination.
- For further detailed medical advice, see the current International SOS medical alert on 2019-nCoV within the [Pandemic Information Site](#). The [FluTrackers](#) forum is a crowd source site that also has a lot of useful information.

Background

Affected areas

The authorities confirmed the first cases of the pneumonia-like coronavirus on 31 December 2019 in Wuhan. On 20 January 2020, more than 100 new cases were announced in China, sparking concerns ahead of the Lunar New Year holiday period and leading to increased screening measures imposed in both China and nearby countries. At least six fatalities have been

confirmed since the outbreak, all in Wuhan. 2019-nCoV cases have also been reported in the capital Beijing, Shanghai and Tianjin municipalities, Guangdong province and Hong Kong.

The Chinese authorities have linked the virus to a market for seafood and game meat in Wuhan that has been closed since 01 January. [CNN reports](#) show small mammals for sale in the market. Several of the 41 affected people in the city were employees or visitors of the market. Most patients are experiencing only mild to moderate symptoms, although there have been fatalities.

Screening measures & travel restrictions

- In Wuhan, the authorities have installed 35 temperature screening stations at bus stops, train stations and Wuhan Tianhe International airport. Local tourist groups have been banned from leaving the city, and local authorities are inspecting private cars to prevent people importing and exporting animals. If anybody shows symptoms associated with the virus they will be quarantined and taken to a designated hospital.
- Passengers flying from Wuhan to Hong Kong will be required to fill out health declaration forms.
- On 20 January, a number of airports in Zhejiang province introduced temperature screening on travellers arriving from Wuhan. These airports include Taizhou Luqiao (HYN), Wenzhou Longwan International (WNZ), Yiwu (YIW), Ningbo Lishe International (NGB) and Hangzhou Xiaoshan International (HGH) .
- The authorities in Shenzhen have introduced temperature screenings at transport hubs including railway stations, airports, docks and bus stations.
- On 22 January, Guangzhou will introduce temperature checks at metro stations.
- Singapore, India and Indonesia have all released advisories regarding travel to Wuhan, though travel restrictions have not yet been implemented.
- The Australian government travel advice for Wuhan has been raised to level 2, informing travellers to exercise a 'high degree of caution'.

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