1. Test for novel coronavirus (COVID-19) in patients who have:
   - travelled to (including transit through) mainland China in the 14 days before the onset of illness OR
   - have had contact in 14 days before illness onset with a confirmed case of COVID-19
   AND
   - presented with fever OR acute respiratory infection (e.g. shortness of breath or cough).
2. Also consider COVID-19 testing for patients who have travelled to Thailand, Hong Kong, Japan, Singapore, or Indonesia in the 14 days before onset of symptoms.
3. You can order tests at participating pathology collection services.

Testing update:
- Test patients who have fever or respiratory symptoms and have travelled in China in the 14 days before onset of symptoms or who have had contact with a confirmed case.
- Also consider testing patients with a clinically compatible illness who travelled to Thailand, Hong Kong, Japan, Singapore or Indonesia in the 14 days before onset of illness. This recommendation is based on the volume of travel between these countries, Australia and China, and the current epidemiology of COVID-19. Note that the risk in travellers in these countries is lower than that for China.
- In NSW, you don’t need to contact Public Health Unit to arrange testing.

When a patient with suspected COVID-19 infection presents:
- Ask the patient to wear a surgical mask and place them in a separate room.
- Refer patients with severe symptoms (e.g. dyspnoea or severe cough) to your local emergency department for assessment and testing. Please call ahead.
- Use standard, contact and droplet transmission precautions when managing suspected cases and taking specimens: long sleeved gown, gloves, protective eyewear/face shield and a surgical mask.

Arrange testing on patients suspected to have COVID-19 with mild to moderate symptoms:
- Some private pathology companies have capacity to collect specimens for COVID-19 testing. To check where this is currently available, see: www.health.nsw.gov.au/infectious/diseases/Pages/coronavirus-testing.aspx
- Recommended specimens are two combined nose and throat viral swabs (or nasopharyngeal viral swabs) and lower respiratory specimen (sputum) if obtainable. Use standard, contact and droplet precautions.
- Request COVID-19 testing and screening for routine respiratory pathogens. Make sure the patient’s travel history, symptoms and date of onset of symptoms are noted on the laboratory request form.
- For infection control procedures, including environmental cleaning, see: http://www.cec.health.nsw.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0007/567988/Infection-Control-Primary-and-Community-Care-2019-nCoV.pdf
- Note that the practice remains responsible for informing the patient about their test results. Results should be provided by phone to allow patients to cease self-isolation as soon as possible.
- If you are unable to arrange testing in your practice or pathology collection service, please refer the patient to another GP or the local emergency department. Advise the patient to call ahead.

Advise patients to self-isolate while they wait for their COVID-19 test results:
- Patients already in home quarantine must continue to self-isolate for 14 days since last travel or exposure even if the test is negative.

Contact the Public Health Unit (1300 066 055):
- If you have concerns about the ability of a patient to self-isolate, e.g. if they live in a residential facility.
- Immediately, if you are notified of a positive COVID-19 test result.

Further information:

Dr Christine Selvey
A/Director, Communicable Diseases, Health Protection NSW
14 February 2020