

# Novel coronavirus 2019 – Wuhan, China

Update for Clinicians and NSW Emergency Departments

Please distribute this information to all relevant clinical staff



Health

1. Consider novel coronavirus 2019 infection in patients with fever and respiratory symptoms and travel to Wuhan, China in the 14 days before illness onset
2. Isolate suspect cases and add contact and airborne precautions.
3. Report suspect cases immediately to your local Public Health Unit – 1300 066 055 – to arrange for rapid risk assessment together with an ID Physician
4. 2019-nCoV is a notifiable disease under the NSW Public Health Act, 2010

## Situation update:

- As of 22 January, over 200 confirmed cases of novel coronavirus 2019 (2019-nCoV) have been detected including at least four deaths. While the majority of cases have been detected in Wuhan, other cases have been reported from other parts of China as well as Japan, Thailand, South Korea and United States. Almost all cases have had Wuhan contact.
- There is increasing evidence of human-to-human transmission. Recent reports have also identified cases in healthcare workers.
- Infection has caused severe acute respiratory illnesses in many cases, although a number of mild or asymptomatic cases have now been identified through screening of close contacts.

## Identify – consider 2019-nCoV in patients who present with:

- History of travel from Wuhan City, China in the 14 days before illness onset **OR** Close contact with a confirmed case of 2019-nCoV, **AND**
- Fever or history of fever ( $\geq 38^{\circ}\text{C}$ ) and acute respiratory infection (with at least one of the following symptoms: shortness of breath, cough or sore throat), **OR**
- Severe acute respiratory infection requiring admission to hospital with clinical or radiological evidence of pneumonia or acute respiratory distress syndrome (i.e. even if no evidence of fever).

## Isolate and apply infection control precautions

- Isolate suspect cases in a single room with negative pressure air-handling (if available)
- Use standard and transmission-based precautions (contact and airborne), including the use of a P2 mask, disposable gown, gloves and eye protection when entering a patient care area.

## Inform Public Health to arrange for a rapid risk assessment

- 2019-nCoV is a notable disease under the NSW Public Health Act, 2010 report all suspect cases immediately to your local Public Health Unit – **1300 066 055**
- They will arrange for a rapid risk assessment together with an ID Physician.
- Cases may be discharged home if well enough whilst results are pending but discharge must be in made in consultation with the Public Health Unit as follow up and home isolation may be required.

## Investigate – arrange for 2019-nCoV testing if recommended by risk assessment

If recommended, testing should include the following:

- Combined nose and throat viral swabs, or nasopharyngeal viral swabs
- A lower respiratory tract sample (if obtainable) - sputum or an endotracheal tube aspirate.
- EDTA blood and serum.
- Test for alternative causes, including respiratory viruses using multiplex PCR
- In parallel, send samples to ICPMR (NSW Pathology West). Contact the laboratory (Phone: (02) 8890 6255) to inform them of a case for testing and ask for the clinical microbiologist on call.
- Do not wait for local results before sending these samples. Even if local testing returns a positive result 2019-nCoV testing should still be attended
- Seek specialist infectious disease on patient treatment.

## Further information

- <https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/diseases/Pages/novel-coronavirus-2019.aspx>

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C. E. Selvey'.

**Dr Christine Selvey**

A/Director, Communicable Diseases, Health Protection NSW  
22 January 2020

H20/6387