

Novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV)

Factsheet for students and children

Last updated 26 January 2020

An outbreak of novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV) was detected in Wuhan, China in late December 2019. Cases have been reported predominantly in the city of Wuhan, in the Hubei province of China, as well as other Chinese cities and countries, including one confirmed case in Victoria, Australia.

What is this virus?

Coronaviruses can make humans and animals sick. Some coronaviruses can cause illness similar to the common cold and others can cause more serious diseases, including Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) and Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS).

The virus seen in Wuhan, China is called 'novel' because it is new. It has not been detected before this outbreak. Most people infected live in, or travelled to, Wuhan, China. There have been cases of 2019-nCoV reported in other Chinese provinces and other countries. It is likely that the virus originally came from an animal, and there is now evidence that it can spread from person-to-person.

What are the symptoms?

Symptoms can include fever and cough, sore throat, or shortness of breath.

What if my child is well, and returning to school after being in Wuhan, China or other countries with cases in the last 14 days?

Exclusion of well children from school or early childhood services who have travelled to Wuhan, China, or any other areas where there have been reported cases, is NOT required unless the following applies:

- The person is a confirmed case of novel coronavirus
- The person is a close contact with a confirmed case of novel coronavirus in past 14 days.

If you think a child, student or staff member may meet one of the above criteria please call the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) to discuss further actions on 1300 651 160.

What if my child feels sick now or within 14 days of being in Wuhan, China or other countries with cases in the last 14 days?

- If your child has fever, sweats, chills or shortness of breath, they must be excluded from school until they have been reviewed by a doctor.
- Seek medical attention but first place a mask on the student if you have one and call the doctor or hospital before you go and tell them your child has been in.
- When you get to the hospital or doctor's clinic, tell them your child has recently been in Wuhan, China, or other countries with cases of 2019-nCoV and ensure a mask is placed on your child before or as soon as you arrive at the medical facility

If your child has severe symptoms, such as shortness of breath:

- Call 000 and request an ambulance, and
- Inform the paramedics that the patient has been in Wuhan, China, or other countries with cases of 2019-nCoV.

How can I help prevent the spread of 2019-nCoV?

- wash your hands often with soap and water
- Cough and sneeze into your elbow

Where can I get more information?

For Victorian updates to the current incident, go to: <https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/novelcoronavirus>

For national updates: <https://www.health.gov.au/news/latest-information-about-novel-coronavirus>

For international updates: <https://www.who.int/westernpacific/emergencies/novel-coronavirus>

WHO resources <https://www.who.int/health-topics/coronavirus>

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