



Novel Coronavirus 2019 – Information for parents of children in school or childcare – 2 February 2020

An outbreak of novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV) was detected in Hubei Province, China in late December 2019

Exclusion from School or Childcare

On 1 February, there was an important addition to the measures the Australian government is taking to protect the community against novel coronavirus.

There is new evidence that there are now an increasing (but still relatively small) number of cases in provinces in mainland China, outside of Hubei Province.

For this reason, from the time of 1 February announcement

- Students or staff returning from mainland China (excluding Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan) must isolate themselves at home for 14 days after leaving China. This also applies to those who have transited through mainland China.

For people who travelled from China prior to the 1 February announcement

- Students or staff who returned from Hubei Province must isolate themselves at home for 14 days after leaving Hubei Province.
- Students or staff who returned from mainland China (excluding Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan) can attend school or childcare and do not need to be isolated at home. The risk of infection is very low.

For all staff and students:

- Students or staff who have had contact with a confirmed case of novel coronavirus need to isolate themselves for 14 days from the date of last exposure to the case.

Being isolated at home means that you need to stay at home for the full period, except if you are unwell and need medical attention. You cannot go to work, school, or public areas, and should not use public transportation, ride share or taxis. Visitors to the home should be discouraged



What is Coronavirus?

Coronaviruses are a group of viruses that can affect humans and animals. In humans, coronaviruses can cause mild illness, such as the common cold and gastrointestinal infections, as well as more severe illness, such as that caused by SARS (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome) and MERS (Middle East Respiratory Syndrome).

There is an outbreak of a new strain of coronavirus called 'novel coronavirus' or '2019-nCoV'. This has so far mostly only affected people who live in/have visited Hubei Province, China, or those who have had close contact with sick people with the novel coronavirus infection.

The length of time that a person is infectious, that is, can spread the infection to others, is not yet confirmed. There is emerging information that some people may be infectious for a short period before they develop symptoms or have very minimal symptoms. However, this information is very limited and preliminary. While this is believed to be uncommon, this is the reason that the Australian government are taking precautionary steps in asking some returned travellers and contacts of cases to self-isolate at home for 14 days.

The Australian Government is closely monitoring the situation and this advice will be updated as necessary.

For parents of children who are excluded from school or childcare

What are the symptoms of novel coronavirus?

Symptoms include, but are not limited to, fever, cough, sore throat, fatigue and shortness of breath.

What if my child is unwell with these symptoms?

If your child is a close contact of a confirmed case of the novel coronavirus

You need to contact Communicable Disease Control (CDC), ACT Health on (02) 5124 9213 during business hours or by paging (02) 9962 4155 after hours.

CDC will assess and advise on what to do next. If you can't contact CDC, see a doctor. Phone the doctor before attending and tell them that you are a contact of a confirmed case of novel coronavirus.

If your child has travelled to mainland China in the 14 days before the start of the symptoms

Contact your GP for an assessment. When you call your GP's practice, tell the staff that your child has been in mainland China in the 14 days before the start of your symptoms, so that they can be prepared for your visit.

How can we all help prevent the spread of the virus?

Practising good hand and general hygiene is the best defence against the spread of the virus.

- Wash your hands often with soap and water before and after eating as well as after using the toilet,
- avoid close contact with others, and
- cough and sneeze into your elbow or directly into a tissue and throw the tissue in a bin.

Where can I get more information about home isolation?

We understand this is a stressful period for staff and families in home isolation.

For more information about how to take care of yourself and your family, go to our website for more information.

Where can I get more information about novel coronavirus?

<https://www.health.act.gov.au/public-health-alert/information-about-novel-coronavirus>

<https://www.health.gov.au/health-topics/novel-coronavirus>

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