

27 January 2020

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Ministry of Health Advisory Summary

This advisory provides an update on the novel coronavirus 2019_nCoV. Please note here is the link to draft Guidance for Health Professionals. Or visit the Ministry of Health website and use the link on the home page for Novel Coronavirus Latest Information and see the Advice for Health Professionals section.

https://www.health.govt.nz/system/files/documents/pages/health_advice_for_health_professionals_novel_coronavirus_wuhan_2020_01_24_0.pdf

Background: As of the morning of 24 January 2020, approximately 580 confirmed cases of the novel coronavirus have been detected, and 17 deaths have been reported. Of the confirmed cases 571 cases have been reported in China in 25 provinces, with the majority of cases from Hubei province. Nine exported cases have been reported in Thailand (3), Japan (1), South Korea (1), the USA (1), Hong Kong (1), Taiwan (1), and Macau (1) all with reported travel to Wuhan. There have been 17 deaths, all of which have been reported from Wuhan, and 10 are reported to have had underlying medical conditions.

Risk assessment: The Ministry's risk assessment is that currently the risk of a sustained outbreak caused by the novel coronavirus is low in New Zealand. This assessment however recognises that there is a small risk of a case being imported into New Zealand. This is the northern hemisphere influenza season and so we expect to see increased numbers of travellers from the northern hemisphere with influenza-like illnesses.

There are no direct flights from Wuhan to New Zealand. Under usual circumstances, around 7800 passengers arrive in New Zealand per annum from Wuhan, the vast majority through Auckland International Airport, and the remainder through Christchurch International Airport. There are around 450,000 travellers from Mainland China each year, of whom 400,000 arrive on direct flights and the remainder transit through Hong Kong, Sydney, Singapore and Kuala Lumpur. We expect around 50,000 travellers from China over the next month, related to Chinese New Year.

World Health Organization (WHO) Advice: The Director-General of the World Health Organization convened an IHR Emergency Committee for pneumonia due to the novel Coronavirus 2019_nCoV on 22 January 2020. The objectives of this meeting were to review the status of pneumonia due to the novel Coronavirus and provide views to the Director-General of WHO on whether the event constitutes a public health emergency of international concern and on issuing potential Temporary Recommendations. On 24 January 2020, the WHO advised that the event did not constitute a public health emergency of international concern (PHEIC) but the Committee will reconvene in ten days to examine the situation further.

WHO's advice to countries like New Zealand is that further international exportation of cases may appear in any country. All countries should be prepared for containment, including active surveillance, early detection, isolation and case management, contact tracing and prevention of onward spread of 2019-nCoV infection. Countries should also follow travel advice from WHO. The World Health Organization (WHO) does not currently recommend any specific measures for travellers and advises against the application of any travel or trade restrictions on China based on the current information.

Community and Public Health

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New Zealand Border Measures: The Ministry of Health is already undertaking actions that meet the WHO's recommendations. New Zealand's current level of activity is appropriate and will continue. We reiterate that, at this time, there are **no travel restrictions** or other border measures in place at the New Zealand border in relation to this event. Health officials have considered most viable for implementing at New Zealand international air and sea ports as below.

- Ensured copies of the health advice card, in both Chinese (simplified) and Chinese (traditional) are available at international points of entry. These provide general advice on symptoms of concern and advises ill travellers to call Healthline (for free) and mention their travel history.
- Confirmed Healthline is triaging symptomatic callers
- Customs has agreed to provide health advice cards at Customs' officers' desks and through Customs' electronic signage.
- Public health staff have been asked to support their local Customs airport and sea port staff by ensuring supplies of health advice cards are available and checking location of signage.
- Public health staff may use this opportunity to arrange meetings with their border stakeholders to provide information about infection prevention and control (and to remind border staff of the importance of ensuring vaccinations are up to date).
- We are developing banners for points of entry in traditional Chinese and simplified Chinese to draw attention to the availability of the health advice cards.
- ISS McKay, who manage 98 percent of cruise vessel arrivals into New Zealand, have agreed to share the general health advice posters and the travel advice cards (English and Chinese versions) with incoming vessels so they can display this for passengers, and with their agents across the country so they can ensure messaging is displayed in terminals.
- Tourism Industry Aotearoa has agreed to work with accommodation providers and tour operators (particularly those who specialise in providing services to Chinese visitors), to ensure health advice cards are available.
- The Ministry of Health website has been updated with a fact sheet for travellers (and we are currently getting translations made)
- We are drafting advice for managing ill travellers.

Today we held a series of meetings:

- The Technical Expert Advisory Group met to review the draft Guidance for Health Professionals. This is interim guidance and will continue to be reviewed as the situation evolves. This advice can be found here:
https://www.health.govt.nz/system/files/documents/pages/health_advice_for_health_professionals_novel_coronavirus_wuhan_2020_01_24_0.pdf
- Interagency Pandemic Group met and was provided an update on the international situation and domestic response measures, including the latest advice from the World Health Organisation.
- Border Working Group met and was provided an update on the international situation, including latest advice from the World Health Organisation and also discussed key messages, and personal protection for border agency staff. We have included the Border Advisory Update information in this email.

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- Representatives of Public Health Units met and were provided with an update on the WHO recommendations from its emergency committee meetings and the Ministry's actions including those arising from the WHO advice.

Communications

A web page has been established on the Ministry's website at <https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/diseases-and-conditions/novel-coronavirus-china-2019-ncov> please direct the public and journalists to this information. It continues to be updated as we receive new information.

If you have specific queries around novel coronavirus and need to talk to someone please email us on ncovresponse@health.govt.nz

Here is a link to the Ministry's general guidance on preventing the spread of infectious diseases: <https://www.health.govt.nz/your-health/healthy-living/environmental-health/infectious-disease-prevention-and-control/prevent-spread-infectious-disease>

Here is a link to the Ministry's workplace infectious disease prevention: <https://www.health.govt.nz/your-health/healthy-living/environmental-health/infectious-disease-prevention-and-control/workplace-infectious-disease-prevention>

Yours sincerely

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