



# Novel coronavirus update - 29th January 2020

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## News article

*29 January 2020*

The novel coronavirus will become publicly notifiable from tomorrow (Thursday 30 January 2020).

As a notifiable illness, health practitioners and laboratories will be required to notify Medical Officers of Health of cases of novel coronavirus.

Until now, the Ministry of Health has supported DHBs to keep us fully informed of any suspected cases.

New Zealand has not had any cases of novel coronavirus reported in New Zealand. However, there have been more than 4,500 cases reported internationally. Sixty-five cases have now been reported outside of mainland China, including 5 confirmed cases in Australia.

We realise there is still a risk that the illness will arrive in New Zealand. However, we believe the risk of a sustained outbreak of coronavirus infection in New Zealand is low.

The Ministry is taking this evolving situation extremely seriously and is in constant communication with other Government agencies, DHBs and emergency management teams throughout New Zealand.

Public health staff at the Auckland and Christchurch International Airports have now met with approximately two-thousand passengers on flights arriving at Auckland Airport and almost 300 passengers arriving at Christchurch International Airport from mainland China. No travellers have self-identified as unwell and no-one has required nurse assessment to date.

## Incorrect and misleading email

It's important members of the public and the entire health sector have the correct information they need to protect themselves and their whānau from the spread of illness. That's why it's important to stress that an email currently being circulated with misleading and incorrect public health information about coronavirus.

We wish to stress this advice has NOT come from the Ministry of Health.

We regularly update our advice on the [Novel coronavirus \(2019-nCoV\) page \(our-work/diseases-and-conditions/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov\)](#), including advice for travellers to New Zealand.

## Travelling in New Zealand

The World Health Organization does not recommend any specific health measures for travellers but is continuing to review the situation.

WHO advises people follow the basic principles to reduce the general risk of acute respiratory infection. These are:

- avoid close contact with people suffering acute respiratory infections
- wash hands frequently, especially after contact with ill people or their environment
- avoid close contact with sick farm animals or wild animals
- people with symptoms of acute respiratory infection should practice cough etiquette:
  - maintain distance
  - cover coughs and sneezes with disposable tissues or clothing
  - wash hands.

It's important people continue to feel comfortable to carry on with their normal travel plans and other activities if they feel fit and healthy.

All travellers to New Zealand who become sick within a month of their arrival are encouraged to seek medical advice and contact Healthline at [0800 611 116 \(tel:0800611116\)](tel:0800611116), or a doctor and share their travel history. It is important to mention recent travel from Wuhan and any known contact with someone with severe acute respiratory illness who has been in Wuhan.

As with all respiratory illnesses, people can take steps to reduce their risk of infection. This includes regularly washing hands, covering your mouth & nose when you sneeze, staying home if you are sick and avoiding close contact with anyone with cold or flu-like symptoms.