



Novel Coronavirus 2019 – Information for Students and Staff of Universities or other Tertiary Education Institutions

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

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, it does mean that returned travellers from Hubei Province may be able to transmit the infection before they develop obvious symptoms.

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

What are the symptoms?

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

Can I attend University or another Tertiary Education Institution if I have travelled from Hubei Province of China?

Returned travellers who have been in the Hubei Province in China must be isolated in their home for 14 days after leaving Hubei Province, other than for the purpose of seeking individual medical care.

If you develop symptoms (as noted above), contact your GP for an assessment. When you call your GP’s practice, tell the staff that you have been in Hubei Province so that they can be prepared for your visit.

Can I attend University or another Tertiary Education Institution if I have been in close contact with a confirmed case of 2019-nCoV?

If you have been informed that you are a close contact of a confirmed case of the novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV) you need to contact Communicable Disease Control, ACT Health on 5124 9213.

You should isolate yourself at home for 14 days following your exposure to the confirmed case, other than for the purpose of seeking individual medical care. You cannot attend university or another tertiary education institution until ACT Health informs you that it is safe for you to do so. Students who live on campus at university should contact their halls of residence for information.

ACT Health will contact you once a day for 14 days after your last exposure to the infectious person to check on your health. If you develop symptoms (as noted above), you need to contact Communicable Disease Control, ACT Health.

Can I attend University or another Tertiary Education Institution if I've recently returned from mainland China?

Yes. We do not currently recommend isolation for travellers returning from other parts of China or other countries.

If you have recently travelled to mainland China and have developed symptoms (as noted above), contact your GP for an assessment. Your GP will liaise with ACT Health and determine whether you should be isolated and excluded from university or another tertiary education institution.

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.

More information

<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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