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.

Exclusion from Universities or other Tertiary Education Institutions

On 1 February 2020, 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, as of the 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 returning from Hubei Province must isolate themselves at home for 14 days after leaving Hubei Province.
- Students or staff returning from mainland China (excluding Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan) can attend their university or tertiary education institution 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 must 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.

Students who live on campus at university should also contact their halls of residence for information.
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.

What are the symptoms?

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

What if I become unwell with these symptoms?

If you are 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 you have 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 you have 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.

More information


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If you have difficulty reading a standard printed document and would like an alternative format, please phone 13 22 81.

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