

Novel Coronavirus

FAQs



Novel Coronavirus

FAQs

[**What is a novel coronavirus?**](https://www.who.int/news-room/q-a-detail/q-a-coronaviruses)

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses that are known to cause illness ranging from the common cold to more severe diseases such as Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS).

However *novel* coronavirus (2019-nCoV) is a new strain of coronavirus that has not been previously identified in humans.

[**What are the symptoms of novel coronavirus?**](https://www.who.int/news-room/q-a-detail/q-a-coronaviruses)

It depends on the virus, but common signs include respiratory symptoms, fever, cough, shortness of breath, and breathing difficulties.

[**What can I do to protect myself?**](https://www.who.int/news-room/q-a-detail/q-a-coronaviruses)

Standard recommendations to reduce exposure to and transmission of a range of illnesses include maintaining basic hand and respiratory hygiene and avoiding close contact, when possible, with anyone showing symptoms of respiratory illness such as coughing and sneezing.

[**How could I become infected with novel coronavirus?**](https://www.who.int/news-room/q-a-detail/q-a-coronaviruses)

Novel coronavirus is transmitted from person to person, usually when an infected person coughs or sneezes.

**I was on a bus next to someone and they coughed on me. Could I have caught coronavirus?**

If you begin to exhibit any symptoms such as a fever, cough, respiratory distress, feeling unwell, runny nose, then you should contact your GP or call 13 HEALTH (13 43 25 84).

**Should I keep myself or my family at home from work or university?**

No, unless you are showing symptoms of novel coronavirus and have recently returned from China, or have been in contact with someone who also has symptoms and has recently returned from China, there isn’t any reason to stay at home.

**Should I keep my family home from childcare, school or TAFE?**

People who have visited China, including Hong Kong, in the past two weeks should not attend childcare, school or TAFE until 14 days has lapsed from their date of departure from China. This includes students, teachers and anyone who works or attends these facilities.

Contacts of any confirmed novel coronavirus case must self-isolate and should not attend childcare, school or TAFE for 14 days following exposure.

**Should any public events or mass gatherings be cancelled?**

There is no need to cancel any events or gatherings or take additional precautions to normal practice. There are currently no cases in Queensland, but people who are unwell should not attend public events.

**What should I do if I think I have novel coronavirus?**

If you:

* are showing symptoms of respiratory illness and have recently returned from China, or
* have been in contact with someone who has had coronavirus or symptoms and has recently returned from China,

you should contact your GP immediately or call 13 HEALTH (13 43 25 84).

Before your GP appointment please call the GP and advise them of your symptoms so they can take the necessary precautions.

**Who should be tested for novel coronavirus?**

Anyone who has been to China within the last 14 days and is showing symptoms should immediately get tested for novel coronavirus.

In addition,

* anyone who has symptoms and has been in contact with someone who has been to China within the last 14 days with symptoms
* anyone who has been in contact with someone who has coronavirus.

should immediately get tested for novel coronavirus.

**When can I get tested?**

You can only be tested when you are showing symptoms of the virus. The test will not be effective on people not showing relevant symptoms.

[**Is there a treatment for a novel coronavirus?**](https://www.who.int/news-room/q-a-detail/q-a-coronaviruses)

There is no specific treatment for disease caused by a novel coronavirus. However, many of the symptoms can be treated and therefore treatment is based on the patient’s clinical condition. Moreover, supportive care for infected persons can be highly effective.

[**Is there a vaccine for a novel coronavirus?**](https://www.who.int/news-room/q-a-detail/q-a-coronaviruses)

There is currently no vaccine for a novel coronavirus.

**What is Australia doing about novel coronavirus?**

The Australian Department of Health is monitoring the situation and is ready to increase their response activities if and when they need to.

Australia has well-established procedures to ensure people with illnesses travelling into the country are detected at the border.

Australia already requires airlines to report passengers who show signs of an infectious disease, including fever, sweats or chills, so sick travellers can be met by biosecurity officers when they arrive in Australia to be assessed.

The Australian Department of Health will work closely with State and Territory Chief Health Officers, to ensure they coordinate an evidence based response in Australia.

The Australian Department of Health is also discussing novel coronavirus with the [Department of Agriculture](https://www.agriculture.gov.au/). Agriculture manages Australia’s biosecurity at the border, including:

* human health
* the [World Health Organization](https://www.who.int)
* our international counterparts

**What is the status of novel coronavirus in QLD?**

For up-to-date information on the status of Novel Coronavirus visit the Queensland Government [novel coronavirus report](http://conditions.health.qld.gov.au/HealthCondition/condition/14/217/838/novel-coronavirus?utm_medium=website&utm_source=QhealthWWW&utm_campaign=dh-coronavirus-jan2020&utm_term=&utm_content=homepage-info-tile) web page.

**I’m travelling to China, what is the risk of catching novel coronavirus?**

International travellers to China should check the latest Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) travel advice on the [Smartraveller website](https://www.smartraveller.gov.au/).

Health authorities both in Australia and globally are closely monitoring the virus as the situation develops.