

Background:

2019-novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV)

On 8 January 2020 a new coronavirus "2019-novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV)" was identified as originating for the city of Wuhan, Hubei province China. Over this period the virus has spread to a number of countries and has caused fatalities. There are no known vaccines against the virus – although reporting from Hong Kong indicates that early work on a vaccine is underway. Further cases are expected over the next few weeks as the incubation period for this virus can be as long as 14 days, although the geographic extent and size of the outbreak cannot be predicted. This is a rapidly evolving situation and there is much that is still unknown about this virus.

At the time of this notice, reporting indicates that approx. 50 million people are currently inside isolation zones with restricted movement as several large cities have been placed on lock down in China. In the days before the lock down came into effect government officials have been quoted on numerous global media outlets as saying, an estimated 5 million people left the Hubei province and travelled across the region before the lock down was enforced; 11,000 were known to have travelled to Thailand and, 5,000 to Hong Kong and 10,000 to Singapore. At present, the United States is evacuating citizens from Wuhan, and Japan and France have both said they are preparing to fly their citizens out, with the French health minister saying anyone evacuated would be isolated for 14 days in an effort to contain the virus. Philippine and Singaporean authorities are likely to restrict government workers from offices and suspend schools. Many government authorities have elevated travel warnings in place for travel to China, and Major Airlines are now cancelling routes to China.

Key Facts for 2019-nCoV

The below are confirmed and verified details about the Corona Virus from Health Agencies:

Transmission

In general, coronaviruses spread from one person to another in the same way as other respiratory infections, including colds and flu - through infected respiratory droplets. The sick person expels these when they cough, sneeze, or talk. Others can get the disease via contact (direct or indirect) with these contaminated droplets.

- Environment-to-human': (Animals) Preliminary information suggests that the novel coronavirus is "zoonotic" - transmitted from an animal source to humans. The initial cluster of cases appeared to have a common source of exposure - a local live seafood and animal market.
- Human-to-human': (Coughing / Sneezing) from a sick person to others who are in close contact. There is growing evidence of human-to-human transmission with family clusters and transmission to healthcare workers.

Symptoms

Symptoms include fever, cough, shortness of breath and breathing difficulty. Around 25% of cases in China have been severe and fatalities have been recorded. People with underlying health conditions appear to be at higher risk for severe disease.

Diagnosis

Specific tests have been developed to diagnose 2019-nCoV. Testing is available in some designated laboratories, however is becoming more widely available. Samples may need to be sent abroad, which can cause a delay in diagnosis.

Treatment

Treatment of the new coronavirus is supportive with medication to reduce fever and to support and improve respiratory function. There is no specific antiviral therapy against this virus.

Vaccination

There is no available vaccine against 2019-nCoV.

Prevention

This is a viral infection which cannot be treated by antibiotics. Furthermore, there is currently no vaccine and recommended treatment at this time is management of symptoms. General hygiene measures and safe food practices are key to controlling and halting infection.

- Preventive measures are to avoid potential exposure, employ general hygiene measures and safe food practices.
- Do not visit "wet" markets (markets with live animals) or farms. Avoid direct contact with animals (live or dead) and their environment.
- Do not touch surfaces that may be contaminated with droppings.
- Wash your hands frequently. Carry hand sanitiser for use when soap and water are not readily available.
- Maintain good personal hygiene. Avoid touching your face.
- Keep some distance from people who are obviously sick.
- Ensure food, including eggs and meat, is thoroughly cooked.