
To:	General Practices, Pharmacists, After-Hours Centres and Emergency Departments in the greater Wellington and Wairarapa regions
From:	Dr Annette Nesdale, Medical Officer of Health
Date:	22 January 2020
Title:	Latest information summary from the Ministry of Health: Novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV) China

Please distribute the following information from the NEW ZEALAND MINISTRY OF HEALTH to relevant staff in your organisation.

Latest information summary from the Ministry of Health novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV), Wuhan, China

Background:

Wuhan city has reported a total of 198 cases of pneumonia caused by this new coronavirus infection. Nine people are critically ill, and 4 have died. The remaining patients are in stable condition or have been discharged. Over 800 close contacts have been tracked and only ninety people are still under medical observation. Among close contacts, no related cases were found.

Cases identified outside Wuhan:

So far there are reports of four exported cases of novel coronavirus from Wuhan city; two in Thailand, one in Japan and one in South Korea and a suspected case has been reported from Nepal. A few cases exported from Wuhan were also found in other cities in China (Shenzen and Beijing). While many initial cases are associated with a Wuhan seafood market, a number of cases visited Wuhan but not the market.

Risk assessment:

The **Ministry's risk assessment** is that currently the risk of a 2019-nCoV infection outbreak is **very low in New Zealand**. This assessment however recognises that there is a small risk of 2019-nCoV infection being imported into New Zealand. However as Wuhan is in the middle of the winter season, common respiratory illnesses are expected among travellers from Wuhan. The Ministry is considering making novel coronaviruses affecting humans notifiable. **NOTE:** Further advice from the WHO is pending following their meeting of the International Health Regulations (IHR) Emergency Committee today.

New Zealand border health and other preventive measures:

- There are no direct flights between Wuhan and New Zealand. There are approximately 7,250 air travellers from Wuhan to New Zealand per annum.

PUBLIC HEALTH ALERT

22 January 2020 - Page 2 of 2

- The World Health Organization (WHO) does not **currently** recommend any specific measures for travellers and advises against the application of any travel or trade restrictions on China.
- Aircraft pilots and ships masters of craft arriving into New Zealand must meet requirements for pratique (health clearance). If an ill traveller is identified this will be responded to in accordance with the existing ill traveller protocols.
- Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch international airports have displays of Health Advice cards, in both Chinese (simplified) and Chinese (traditional) for incoming travellers. This provides general advice on symptoms of concern and advises ill travellers to call Healthline (for free) and mention their travel history.
- Large banners printed in Chinese to draw attention to the Health Advice cards at airports are pending.
- The Ministry and local Public Health units are liaising with Customs and international airports and sea ports to ensure supplies of Health Advice cards, check location of signage and provide information about infection prevention and control for border agencies.
- The Ministry will contact tourism stakeholders to check they have updated information and have Health Advice cards to provide Chinese travellers, via accommodation and tour providers.
- The Safe Travel website <https://www.safetravel.govt.nz/> has information about this new coronavirus for travellers.

Advice for primary and secondary care:

- Ask about recent travel history when assessing ill people who have arrived recently from overseas.
- Have PPE and masks available for people presenting with respiratory symptoms.
- Hospitals should have a cautious approach with patients with symptoms of pneumonia and relevant travel history; contact and airborne precautions should be implemented in addition to standard precautions.
- The Ministry of Health are developing guidance for health practitioners and this will be published on their website later this week.

Further advice is available at:

- Ministry of Health www.health.govt.nz/our-work/diseases-and-conditions/novel-coronavirus-china-2019-ncov
- SafeTravel www.safetravel.govt.nz/
- WHO www.who.int/health-topics/coronavirus