

21 February 2020



Novel Coronavirus  
(COVID-19)

Health Professional Advisory

## COVID-19 - Advice for primary care

- Consider novel coronavirus (COVID-19) infection in patients with fever or history of fever and respiratory symptoms or sore throat who recently travelled to or from mainland China.
- For severe illness, contact DHB Infectious Diseases Specialist and arrange admission via ambulance.
- Call ARPHS on 09 623 4600 to discuss all notifications and then fax completed notification form to 09 630 7431.

### Current Situation

- There is an outbreak of a novel (new) coronavirus (COVID-19) originating in Wuhan, Hubei, China
- Cases have been exported, there is evidence of human-to-human transmission, and some healthcare workers have been infected. The case-fatality rate is currently ~2%, though fatality rates are much lower outside China.
- The incubation period is currently considered to be 2-14 days from time of exposure
- A case is considered as potentially infectious 48 hours prior to developing symptoms, while symptomatic, and until symptom-free for 24 hours.

### Identify Symptoms and Exposure History

Does the patient meet the following criteria for a suspect case\*?

#### Epidemiological criteria

Travel to or from (including transit through) mainland China within 14 days before onset of illness

**OR**

Close contact (refer close contact section) of a confirmed case of COVID-19 infection in the 14 days before the onset of illness

#### Clinical criteria

Fever or history of fever and acute respiratory infection with at least one of the following symptoms:  
shortness of breath, cough or sore throat

\*Case definitions may change. Please see the [Ministry of Health website](#) for the latest case definition

If the patient meets the epidemiological criteria, but has no illness, ask them to self-isolate at home, and to call dedicated coronavirus line on 0800 358 5453 or their doctor if they develop symptoms.

**Action for Patients Who Meet Case Definition:**

<p>Personal Protection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provide a surgical mask to the patient and supervise them donning the mask</li><li>• Place the patient in a single room with a closed door</li><li>• When reviewing the patient use <b>standard</b> plus <b>contact</b> plus <b>droplet</b> precautions including a disposable fluid resistant gown, gloves, surgical mask and eye protection</li><li>• Ensure that PPE is removed and disposed of safely. Perform hand hygiene</li><li>• <b>Avoid use of nebulisers or other aerosol generating procedures.</b></li></ul>	
<p><b>MILD ILLNESS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Discuss and notify with ARPHS Medical Officer of Health (09 6234600)</b></li></ul> <p>If it is decided that the patient <b>does not</b> require hospitalisation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Discuss testing with ARPHS</li><li>• Take viral upper respiratory swabs; both nasopharyngeal and oropharyngeal (throat), using a flocked swab in a red viral tube. Both swabs can be placed in the same tube. Put travel history and clinical details on the lab request form including onset date and note case has been discussed with Public Health</li><li>• Give fact sheet <a href="#">Information for people under investigation for novel coronavirus (COVID-19 )</a> to the patient. Further resources - <a href="#">ARPHS COVID-19 web page</a></li><li>• Give verbal advice on when to seek further medical care</li><li>• If the case is under investigation or confirmed, primary care should provide advice on isolation and continue to monitor.</li></ul>	<p><b>MODERATE TO SEVERE ILLNESS</b></p> <p>If it is decided that the patient <b>does</b> require hospitalisation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Phone DHB Infectious Diseases or Paediatric consultant</li><li>• Arrange transfer via ambulance.</li><li>• Inform admitting/ED of referral prior to patient arrival</li><li>• Notify ARPHS Medical Officer of Health (09 623 4600)</li></ul>

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Public health will communicate negative results and their implications to practitioners and patients</li><li>• Some patients with a negative test result are required to remain in isolation if 1. they have been in China in the last 14 days, 2. others in the household are under investigation for COVID-19 or 3. they have been in close contact with a suspect or confirmed case.</li></ul> |  |
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### **Close Contact Tracing**

Should a suspect case of COVID-19 be confirmed, ARPHS will manage all close and casual contact tracing, including from medical centre and ED waiting room exposure.

For your information, a close contact is any individual who has been in contact with a case while the case is infectious (48 hours prior to symptoms until symptom free for a minimum of 24 hours) by:

- Direct contact with the case or their body fluids or their laboratory specimens, or in the same room in a health care setting when an aerosol generating procedure is undertaken on the case, without appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE)
- Living in the same household or household-like setting (e.g. in a hostel) as a case
- Having spent two hours or longer in the same room (such as a general practice or ED waiting room) as a case
- Having been seated within 2 rows either side of a COVID-19 case on a flight, bus or train for two hours or longer
- Having been face-to-face within one metre or less of the case for more than 15 minutes in any other setting not listed above

### **Cleaning**

After the patient has left, ensure a stand-down period of at least 20 minutes before cleaning the room. PPE requirements for cleaning are gloves and gown. Wipe down high touch surfaces with disinfectant wipes (e.g. Clinell Universal Wipes), afterwards ensure PPE is disposed of safely and appropriately in a closed clinical waste bin, followed by hand hygiene.

### **Practice Reminders**

- Please display clear signage outside doors, update phone messages and practice websites.
- Please educate all frontline staff including receptionists to ask if patients making appointments have travelled to China in the last 14 days or have symptoms of COVID-19.

### **Where to get further advice**

[COVID-19 - Resources for health professionals | Ministry of Health NZ](#)

[Auckland Regional Public Health Service website](#)

[– COVID-19 \(novel coronavirus\) | Ministry of Health NZ](#)

[Ministry of Education COVID-19](#)

[Advice for travellers](#)

[World Health Organisation COVID-19](#)