



## Latest news v3, 6 February 2020: novel coronavirus

**In December 2019, an outbreak of a novel (new) coronavirus (2019-nCoV), began in Wuhan City, Hubei Province, China.**

The latest information indicates evidence of human-to-human transmission. Symptoms include fever, difficulty breathing, non-specific upper respiratory tract infection symptoms such as cough and sore throat and chest radiographs showing bilateral pneumonic infiltrations. No vaccine or specific treatment is currently available.

Clinicians should be on alert for these symptoms in anyone who has recently travelled anywhere in China or has been in close contact with a suspected case of novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV). Clinicians should report suspected cases to the **Metro South Public Health Unit on 07 3156 4000.**

A cautious approach to infection control is recommended, including standard, contact and airborne precautions, and asking people suspected of having the infection to wear a surgical mask.

### Novel coronavirus resources for general practice

Guidance for primary health and community health workers and the latest updates are available from the [Department of Health Website](#).

Current advice for primary health care workers that identify a suspected case is as follows:

- place a surgical mask on the patient
- place patient in isolated room
- use standard plus contact plus droplet precautions including a disposable fluid-resistant gown, gloves, surgical mask, and eye protection while reviewing the patient:
  - airborne precautions, i.e. a P2/N95 mask and eye protection must also be used while collecting specimens. GPs can collect clinical specimens using appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) as is recommended in the national guidance. Where they do not have access to the appropriate PPE patients can be referred to private pathology collection centres or to hospitals if clinically indicated
  - for a list of approved centres for collection of specimens for novel coronavirus 2019-nCoV virus testing please refer to the attached lists ([Mater](#) and [QML](#)) or visit [www.snp.com.au](http://www.snp.com.au)
- seek advice - immediately contact your state/territory public health unit/communicable disease branch if you encounter a suspected case:
  - for Metro South Public Health Unit contact 07 3156 4000 for further guidance regarding next steps, specimen collection.

For information related to non-clinical enquiries or advice not specifically related to a suspected case contact 13 HEALTH on 13 43 25 84.

Queensland Health has developed an asset library of resources for health professionals, including key messages, on the novel coronavirus.

[Download a poster](#) for your practice, or browse the full Queensland Health [asset library here](#).

### Access to surgical masks

The Department of Health is providing access to a limited stockpile of surgical masks for general practices. As supplies are limited, PHNs have been given the role of distributing surgical masks to practices with a demonstrated need, for example:

- where there is no local supply available commercially
- where practices serve a population which may be more likely to have been exposed to the novel coronavirus
- where practices have an unusual number of patients presenting with respiratory symptoms.

These surgical masks are for patients who present to general practice with suspected novel coronavirus, and for practice staff who are at risk of exposure.

Brisbane South PHN have been allocated a limited supply to distribute to practices. If your practice requires surgical masks, please contact Brisbane South PHN by emailing [support@bsphn.org.au](mailto:support@bsphn.org.au)

### Further information for health professionals

The Department of Health will provide regular updates as more information becomes available: [www.health.gov.au](http://www.health.gov.au).

**Queensland Health has launched a web page with [information for health care workers and the general public](#).**

For additional information on the novel (new) coronavirus (2019-nCoV) visit the [World Health Organization website](#).

Brisbane South PHN will continue to provide the latest information on the novel coronavirus.

**For further information, please contact your Area Account Manager at [support@bsphn.org.au](mailto:support@bsphn.org.au)**

[Visit the Department of Health website for more information](#)