



Latest news, 24 February 2020: COVID-19

In December 2019, an outbreak of a novel (new) coronavirus (COVID-19), 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 COVID-19. 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.

COVID-19 resources for general practice

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

The Australian Government Department of Health updated advice for health workers regarding the COVID-19 can be accessed through these links:

- [interim advice on non-inpatient care of people with suspected or confirmed COVID-19](#)
- [interim advice on hospital care of people with suspected or confirmed COVID-19](#)
- [a fact sheet on the use of surgical masks in accordance with the AHPPC national guidelines on the prevention and control of coronavirus outbreak.](#)

Please note that as this is an evolving situation, these documents may be updated in the coming days and weeks.

It is recommended that clinicians should also be alert for and consider COVID-19 and testing for people with symptoms who travelled to any of the following countries in the 14 days before onset of symptoms:

- China
- Hong Kong
- Indonesia
- Iran
- Japan
- Singapore
- South Korea
- Thailand

A number of people in the community have been issued quarantine orders and are self-isolating in their homes for the mandatory 14 day period, with support from Red Cross and Queensland Health. Queensland Health nurses are conducting home visits to review these people and provide them clearance.

For a list of approved centres for collection of specimens for COVID-19 virus testing please refer to [Mater](#) and [QML](#) lists or visit www.snp.com.au

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 have developed a [web page](#) to host the latest available information to assist clinicians to diagnose and/or treat patients with suspected or confirmed COVID-19.

Queensland Health has also developed an asset library of resources for health professionals, including key messages, on the COVID-19.

[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 and community pharmacies. As supplies are limited, PHNs have been given the role of distributing surgical masks to practices and pharmacies with a demonstrated need, for example:

- where there is no local supply available commercially
- where practices and pharmacies serve a population which may be more likely to have been exposed to the COVID-19
- where practices and pharmacies have an unusual number of patients presenting with respiratory symptoms.

These surgical masks are for patients who present to general practice and pharmacies with suspected COVID-19, and for practice staff who are at risk of exposure, and are not for resale or general use.

Brisbane South PHN have been allocated a limited supply of surgical masks. If your practice or pharmacy requires surgical masks, please contact Brisbane South PHN by emailing 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.

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

For additional information on COVID-19 visit the [World Health Organization website](#).

Brisbane South PHN will continue to provide the latest information on the COVID-19.

For further information, please contact your Area Account Manager at support@bsphn.org.au

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