



Latest news: novel coronavirus

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

The latest information indicates evidence of limited 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, and to Wuhan, China in particular. Clinicians should report suspected cases to the **Metro South Public Health Unit on 07 3156 4000.**

While transmission dynamics have yet to be determined, 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

Queensland Health has developed an asset library of resources for health professionals that includes key messages to limit the spread of the novel coronavirus.

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
- 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.
 - Airborne precautions, i.e. a P2/N95 mask and eye protection must also be used while collecting specimens.
- For information related to non-clinical enquiries or advice not specifically related to a suspected case contact 13 HEALTH on 134 325.

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

Register now for the [Coronavirus Information Session](#) for general practice on Wednesday 5 February at 6.30 pm at The Glen Hotel. Brisbane South PHN in conjunction with Metro South Public Health Unit is delivering an education session on managing novel coronavirus in the general practice setting. Participants will be presented with information on the current situation, followed by a Q&A session.

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 have 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 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 email support@bsphn.org.au

Access further information for health professionals

The Department of Health will provide regular updates as more information on this situation becomes available: www.health.gov.au.

Queensland Health has launched a web page with [information for both healthcare 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 on support@bsphn.org.au

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