

NEWS FLASH

OUTBREAK OF THE NOVEL CORONAVIRUS



taking care of our own

The 2019 novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV) has caused an outbreak of fatal respiratory illness first detected in Wuhan, China. Coronaviruses are zoonotic, meaning they are transmitted between animals and people. This is a completely new strain with no vaccines available. **The best way to prevent infection is to avoid being exposed to this virus.**



TRANSMISSION

Since this novel coronavirus was only recently identified, there is currently limited information regarding the modes of transmission, clinical features and severity of the disease.

HUMAN CORONAVIRUSES MOST COMMONLY SPREAD FROM AN INFECTED PERSON TO OTHERS THROUGH:



The **air by coughing** and **sneezing**



Touching an object or surface with the virus on it, then touching your **mouth, nose, or eyes before washing your hands**



Close personal contact, such as **touching or shaking hands**



Faecal contamination (rarely)

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS



There is limited information regarding the clinical features and the severity of the disease at this stage. For confirmed 2019-nCoV infections, reported illnesses have ranged **from infected people with little to no symptoms to people being severely ill and even dying**. Symptoms can include **fever, cough and shortness of breath**. Symptoms may appear in as few as **2 days** or as long as **14** after exposure.

TREATMENT

Treatment is supportive as no specific therapy has been shown to be effective. People who think they may have been exposed to 2019-nCoV should **contact their healthcare providers** immediately.

PREVENTION

There is currently **no vaccine** to prevent 2019-nCoV infection. The best way to **prevent infection** is to avoid being exposed to this virus.



REDUCING EXPOSURE

THERE ARE CERTAIN STEPS YOU CAN TAKE TO REDUCE YOUR EXPOSURE TO 2019-NCOV:



Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitiser.



Seek medical care early and share your previous travel history with your healthcare provider, especially if you have a fever, cough and difficulty breathing.



Cover your mouth and nose with your flexed elbow or a tissue. Throw the tissue away immediately and wash hands.



When visiting animal markets in areas currently experiencing cases of novel coronavirus, **avoid direct unprotected contact with live animals and surfaces** in contact with animals.



Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.



Avoid the consumption of raw or undercooked animal products. Handle raw meat, milk or animal organs with care to avoid cross-contamination with uncooked foods.



Stay home when you are sick.



Avoid travel if you have a fever and cough. If you become sick while using public transport, inform the personnel and seek medical care early.



Clean and disinfect objects and surfaces that are frequently touched.



Avoid close contact with anyone who has a fever and cough.

DEALING WITH SUSPECTED CASES

ANY PERSON WITH THE FOLLOWING RISK FACTORS SHOULD BE INVESTIGATED AND TESTED FOR 2019-NCOV:

- **Severe acute respiratory illness** (SARI), presenting with fever ($\geq 38^{\circ}\text{C}$) or history of fever and cough with pneumonia or acute respiratory distress syndrome (ARDS) **requiring admission to hospital**;
- A **documented travel history** to Wuhan, Hubei Province in China within 14 days before symptom onset;
- Close **physical contact with a confirmed patient** with 2019-nCoV while they are symptomatic.

CLOSE CONTACT INCLUDES THE FOLLOWING:

- Providing **direct care** for 2019-nCoV patients;
- Being exposed to healthcare workers infected with 2019-nCoV;
- Visiting patients or staying in the **same close environment as someone infected** with 2019-nCoV;
- Working in close proximity to someone infected with 2019-nCoV
- Sharing the **same classroom environment** with someone infected with 2019-nCoV;
- **Travelling with someone infected** with 2019-nCoV in any mode of transport;
- Living in the **same household** as someone infected with nCoV;
- Exposure to **patients with severe acute respiratory infections**, unless another cause has been identified to explain the clinical presentation;
- **Exposure to a healthcare facility** in a country where hospital-associated 2019-nCoV infections have been reported.



TRAVELLING TO COUNTRIES WITH REPORTED CONFIRMED CASES

So far, no cases have been reported in South Africa. Based on the information currently available, the World Health Organization (WHO) advises that measures to limit the risk of exportation or importation of the disease should be implemented, without unnecessary restrictions of international traffic. No travel or trade restrictions with China have been recommended by the WHO, but the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends avoiding non-essential travel to China.

Reference: World Health Organization Novel Coronavirus

