



# Novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV)

## Information for parents

*An outbreak of novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV) was detected in Wuhan, Hubei Province, China in late December 2019.*

### Advice on Returning to Schools and Early Childhood Centres

Parents of children are asked NOT to send their children to school if the child has returned from mainland China (excluding Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan) within 14 days. Even if they don't have symptoms, it is advised that they do not attend school or childcare. Although the risk to children is very low, this is a precautionary approach to ensure the safest possible environment for children. Children do not require a medical certificate or clearance, but are asked to remain at home until 14 days after leaving mainland China.

If you or your child has been informed by Public Health authorities that you/they are a close contact of a confirmed case of the novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV), you should contact your local public health unit to get information.

If your child has a recent travel history to mainland China and develops symptoms (listed below), you should contact their primary care provider. Their primary care provider will liaise with Public Health Units and determine whether or not your child needs a medical assessment.

### What is this virus?

Coronaviruses can make humans and animals sick. Some coronaviruses can cause illness similar to the common cold and others can cause more serious diseases, including Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) and Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS).

The virus originating in Hubei Province, China is called 'novel' because it is new. It has not been detected before this outbreak. Most people infected live in, or travelled to, Hubei Province, China. There have been cases of 2019-nCoV reported in other Chinese provinces and other countries. It is likely that the virus originally came from an animal, and there is evidence that it can spread from person-to-person.

### What are the symptoms?

Symptoms include (but are not limited to) fever, cough, sore throat, fatigue and shortness of breath.

### What if my child is sick now or within 14 days of returning from overseas?

If your child develops mild symptoms:

- keep your child at home and avoid other people
- call your usual doctor or local hospital and arrange for an assessment and tell them your child has been overseas
- when you get to the doctor's clinic or hospital, tell them again that your child has been overseas.

If your child has serious symptoms, such as shortness of breath:

- call **000** and ask for an ambulance; and
- tell the paramedic that your child has been overseas;
- your doctor may advise to test your child for 2019-nCoV and they will provide advice on management. You will also be contacted by Public Health officers who will provide you with more information.

All students with symptoms should be excluded from attending schools and early childhood centres until symptoms have resolved.

If they have been diagnosed with 2019-nCoV they should not attend school or childcare until they are cleared by public health authorities. If students have other respiratory illness (i.e. flu), they should not attend school irrespective of whether there is a concern about 2019-nCoV.

## How can I help prevent the spread of 2019-nCoV?

- teach and encourage your children to wash their hands often with soap and water before and after eating as well as after attending the toilet
- avoid contact with others by keeping children home if they are unwell
- teach children to cough and sneeze into their elbow
- while it's not possible to avoid touching, kissing, and hugging children, parents and guardians should do their best to follow these steps too.

## Where can I get more information?

- Visit the WA Department of Health homepage at <https://healthywa.wa.gov.au>
- Call the Coronavirus Health Information Line on 1800 020 080

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