



Update on novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV)

INFORMATION FOR WA GENERAL PRACTITIONERS

KEY POINTS

- Consider 2019-nCoV in patients who have travelled to (including transit through) mainland China in the 14 days before onset of illness, who are presenting with fever OR acute respiratory infection (e.g. shortness of breath or cough) with or without fever.
- Use contact and droplet precautions when collecting respiratory specimens in cases that are asymptomatic or have mild illness in the community.
- Patients with severe symptoms suggestive of pneumonia should be managed in a hospital.
- For up to date information refer to the [WA novel coronavirus](#) webpage.

Patients meeting the following criteria should be assessed for 2019-nCoV

Travel to (including transit through) mainland China in the 14 days before the onset of illness,
OR

close or casual contact in 14 days before illness onset with a confirmed case of 2019-nCoV
AND

fever OR acute respiratory infection (e.g. shortness of breath or cough) with or without fever

Isolate and apply infection control precautions for any patients with suspected 2019-nCoV

- place a surgical mask on the patient and isolate in a single room with the door closed
- use standard, contact and droplet precautions: a disposable fluid resistant gown, gloves, surgical mask, and eye protection while reviewing the patient
- immediately notify a WA Health Public Health Physician to discuss testing
- patients with severe symptoms suggestive of pneumonia, e.g. fever and breathing difficulty, or frequent, severe or productive coughing episodes should be managed in a hospital in a negative pressure isolation room, phone ahead to the Emergency Department to advise

If testing for 2019-nCoV is required

- **Patients with no respiratory symptoms or mild illness in the community:**
 - collection of respiratory specimens is considered low risk; use contact and droplet precautions: gown, gloves, surgical mask and eye protection
 - collect nose and throat swabs, or nasopharyngeal swab, and serum blood sample “to save”; when collecting respiratory specimens stand slightly to the side of the patient to avoid exposure to respiratory secretion; order other respiratory pathogens also
 - use a single room with the door shut, the room does not need to be left empty after sample collection
 - request a chest x-ray if clinically warranted, ring ahead to notify radiology and ensure the patient is masked.
- **Patients with severe symptoms suggestive of pneumonia**
 - use airborne precautions, including a negative pressure room if available; otherwise, use a single room from which air does not circulate to other areas, keep the door closed and leave it vacant for at least 30 minutes afterwards.
 - contact and airborne precautions include: gown, gloves, eye protection (goggles or face shield) and P2/N95 respirator which should be fit checked
 - specimens as above AND collection of sputum for PCR
- samples can be sent to Pathwest via any pathology laboratory with an urgent request for ‘respiratory virus panel and novel coronavirus’; specify the travel history and public health advice
- specimen collection is available at some PathWest collection centres – call ahead.

2019-nCoV is URGENTLY NOTIFIABLE BY PHONE: Call your local public health unit and speak to the Public Health Physician

Metro 9222 8588/1300 MDCWA	Kimberley 9194 1630	South West 9781 2350
Goldfields 9080 8200	Midwest 9956 1985	Wheatbelt 9690 1720
Great Southern 9842 7500	Pilbara 9174 1660	After hours/OnCall 9328 0553