

Novel coronavirus (COVID-19)



There is an active outbreak of a [novel \(new\) coronavirus](#) originating from Wuhan City in Hubei Province in [China](#). There are confirmed cases of individuals with the coronavirus outside China.

On 30 January 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the coronavirus outbreak a [Public Health Emergency](#) of International Concern.

This article covers the following topics:

- [What is coronavirus?](#)
- [What to do before you travel](#)
- [How to stay safe and healthy while you're away](#)
- [What to do if you're concerned about your cruise](#)
- [Returning from your travels](#)
- [Leaving China](#)

What is coronavirus?

[Coronaviruses](#) (CoV) are a large family of viruses that cause illness from the common cold to more severe diseases such as Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS-CoV) and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS-CoV).

Initial human infections of the novel type of coronaviruses were acquired from exposure to animals at a live animal market in Wuhan. On 20 January, Chinese authorities confirmed the novel coronavirus is spreading person-to-person. It remains unknown how easily the virus spreads from person-to-person.

The novel coronavirus (initially known as 2019-nCoV, now known as SARS-CoV-2) is a new strain that has not been previously identified in humans. The disease caused by the virus has been named COVID-19 by the World Health Organization.

Common symptoms of the disease include a fever, cough and difficulty breathing. Severe cases can cause pneumonia, and even death.

More resources for the public, health professionals and industry (some in simplified Chinese) are available from the [Department of Health](#).

What we recommend

The World Health Organization is closely monitoring the situation. If you are considering travelling to any destination with cases of COVID-19, we strongly recommend the following.

Before you travel

- Talk to your doctor before travelling with children, if you are pregnant or have a weak immune system.
- Read our advice about [infectious diseases](#) and [medical assistance overseas](#) before you go.
- Check with your travel agent, airline, cruise operator, accommodation provider and travel insurance provider to consider your options regarding any potential changes in services.
- Read the travel advice for your [destination](#).
- Understand the risks you're taking and that efforts to control the spread of COVID-19 may cause further travel disruptions and restrictions.
- [Subscribe](#) to your destination and our news and follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) to receive latest updates on the situation as they occur

More information:

- [Novel coronavirus \(Department of Health\)](#)
- [Novel coronavirus \(World Health Organization\)](#)

While you're away

Health

To minimise your risk of exposure, we recommend you:

- Avoid all:
 - high-risk areas such as farms, live animal markets, and areas where animals are slaughtered, including fish and seafood
 - contact with animals (alive or dead), including pigs, chickens, ducks and wild birds
 - surfaces with animal droppings or secretions on them
- If you come into contact with any animals or animal products, avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth until you have thoroughly sanitised your hands.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water, carry hand sanitiser with you and use it often
- Keep a distance from sick people, especially if they have a fever, cough, or difficulty breathing
- Monitor your health closely
- See a health care professional immediately if you start feeling unwell
- Follow the advice of local authorities
- Contact your airline or travel company for information about changes to flight services
- It is not known whether wearing a face mask will reduce your risk of exposure to the COVID-19. However, if you are travelling in an affected country, you must follow the advice of local authorities

More information:

- [Infectious diseases](#)

Transport – entry, exit and transit

If you're in an affected area or transiting an area with cases of COVID-19, contact your travel agent and accommodation and transportation providers about any potential changes in services or entry requirements. Check with your travel insurance company about how your specific policy covers the situation.

Many countries have introduced entry restrictions and screening measures at border crossings and transport hubs, including some which have not had cases of COVID-19. You may not be allowed to enter or transit, or you may be quarantined, based on your previous location and symptoms.

Entry, exit and transit conditions can change at short notice. Not all officials or transport providers are applying their policies consistently. Contact the nearest [embassy or consulate](#) of the countries you are visiting before you travel.

[Read](#) and [subscribe](#) to the travel advice for all the destinations you plan to visit or transit.

Going on a cruise?

The majority of cruise itineraries outside North Asia are operating as normal.

If you're concerned about the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak on your cruise plans, check with your travel agent or cruise company and read and subscribe to our travel advisories for your destinations. See also the [Cruise Line International Association \(CLIA\) Australasia's](#) policies to prevent the spread of the virus, which all CLIA ocean member cruise lines are required to implement.

Coming home

Returning from a destination and you feel unwell

If you feel sick while travelling or after returning to Australia you should see a doctor as a precaution, and advise them of your travel history.

If you are in a state to do so, ring ahead of time so your doctor is aware of your symptoms and travel history before you book an appointment.

Returning from a destination with reported cases

Australia has in place border, isolation, surveillance and case tracing mechanisms to protect the Australian community.

Australia has well established mechanisms to respond to ill travellers at points of entry.

Airlines must report passengers on board showing signs of an infectious disease, including fever, sweats or chills. Ill travellers are met on arrival by biosecurity officers who make an assessment and take necessary actions, such as isolation and referral to hospital, where required.

Returning from China

- Foreign nationals (excluding permanent residents of Australia) who are in mainland China will not be allowed to enter Australia until 14 days after they have left or transited through mainland China.
- Australian citizens, permanent residents and their immediate family are able to enter Australia, as well as airline crews who have been using appropriate personal protective equipment
- If you've travelled to Hubei Province in the last 14 days, you must isolate yourself for 14 days.

- If you've left or transited through mainland China on or after 1 February 2020, you must isolate yourself for 14 days after leaving China.
- If you've been in close contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19, you must isolate yourself for 14 days after your last contact with them.

More information:

- [Immigration restrictions](#) (Dept of Home Affairs)
- [Department of Health](#)



Australian Government

Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade