



IMPORTANT PUBLIC HEALTH ALERT

Pneumonia cluster - Wuhan, Hubei Province China

10 January 2020

Summary

- There is a cluster of cases of viral pneumonia in Wuhan, China. The cause is being reported as a novel coronavirus.
- The cluster is centered at the Wuhan South China Seafood City Market (also called the South China Seafood Wholesale Market and the Hua Nan Seafood Market).
- Travelers to Wuhan, China, should avoid living or dead animals, animal markets, and contact with sick people.
- Patients presenting with respiratory illness should always be asked about their travel history. Be alert for patients who have travelled to Wuhan, China, within two weeks of onset of illness and who present with fever and respiratory symptoms. Please place a surgical mask on the patient and isolate as soon as they are identified in a negative pressure room or single room and notify the local [Public Health Unit](#).

Background

There is a cluster of cases of viral pneumonia in Wuhan, China. As of January 5, 2020, local, provincial, and national health commissions in China have reported a total of 59 cases with no deaths. The cluster is centered at the Wuhan South China Seafood City (also called the South China Seafood Wholesale Market and the Hua Nan Seafood Market). In addition to seafood, the market sells chickens, bats, marmots, and other wild animals. The market has been closed since January 1, 2020, for cleaning and disinfection.

Health authorities in China are monitoring more than 150 close contacts for illness. To date, there have been no reports of spread from person-to-person or to healthcare workers.

Reports are that the cause is a novel coronavirus.

Who is at risk?

Only people who have travelled to Wuhan, China are considered to be at risk currently. Travelers to other areas of China, or contacts of travelers to Wuhan are not considered to be at risk. This information may change as more becomes known about the characteristics of the virus.

Symptoms and transmission

- Reported symptoms include fever, shortness of breath and bilateral lung infiltrates on chest x-ray.
- The current definition for a suspected case in Queensland is as follows:
 - *Travel to Wuhan within 14 days of symptom onset AND fever or history of fever AND respiratory symptoms*
- This case definition information may change as further information emerges.
- There have been no reports of spread from person-to-person or to healthcare workers.

Recommendations

Clinicians are asked to be alert for patients of any age presenting with symptoms of pneumonia who meet the suspected case definition above, particularly if they have had contact with the Wuhan South China Seafood City Market. Please ensure that patients presenting with respiratory symptoms and fever to triage, are being asked about travel specific to Wuhan, China.

What to do if you have a patient with respiratory illness and recent travel to Wuhan

- Place a surgical mask on the patient;
- Undertake an assessment in a private room with the door closed if negative pressure ventilation is not available;
- Apply airborne, contact and standard precautions—in particular, wear a P2 respirator / N95 respirator during any assessment;
- Notify the local Public Health Unit who will assist with conducting a risk assessment for suspected cases;
- Undertake testing for alternative causes as soon as possible, in particular for respiratory viruses using multiplex PCR if available;
- After discussion with the Public Health Unit, you may be advised to take two upper respiratory samples (combined dry nose and throat swabs, or dry nasopharyngeal swabs).
- If you have patients who are travelling to Wuhan, China, advise them to avoid living or dead animals, animal markets and contact with sick people, and to should wash their hands often with soap and water.

Clinicians should notify their [local public health](#) unit if they suspect a patient may meet the case definition.

Laboratories should notify their [local public health](#) unit if they receive a test request for respiratory viruses with a history of travel to Wuhan, China.



Map of China

Additional information:

World Health Organization: <https://www.who.int/china/news/detail/09-01-2020-who-statement-regarding-cluster-of-pneumonia-cases-in-wuhan-china>

Authorised by Dr Heidi Carroll
A/Executive Director, Communicable Diseases Branch