



health

Department:
Health
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



NOVEL CORONAVIRUS (2019-nCoV)

TRAVEL ADVISORY

Key points

- **Travelers avoid all nonessential travel to Hubei Province, China, including Wuhan.**
- There is an ongoing outbreak of respiratory illness caused by a novel (new) coronavirus that can be spread from person-to-person.
- Chinese officials have closed transport within and out of Wuhan and other areas in Hubei Province, including buses, subways, trains, and the international airport.
- Preliminary information suggests that older adults and people with underlying health conditions may be at increased risk for severe disease from this virus.
- The situation is evolving. This notice will be updated as more information becomes available.

What is the current situation?

No travel ban to China

- South Africa is not recommending any ban for travelling to China. Based on the currently available information before us, we are satisfied that the Chinese health authorities are doing everything in their power to contain the spread of the disease. On such matters, we are guided by the World Health Organisation (WHO) and International Health Regulations (2005). WHO does not recommend any restriction of travel or trade at this time.
- **However it is recommended that travelers avoid all nonessential travel to Hubei Province, China, including Wuhan.** In response to an outbreak of respiratory illness, Chinese officials have closed transport within and out of Wuhan and other areas in Hubei Province, including buses, subways, trains, and the international airport.
- There may be limited access to adequate medical care in affected areas.

A novel (new) coronavirus is causing an outbreak of respiratory illness that began in the city of Wuhan, Hubei Province, China. This outbreak began in early December 2019 and continues to grow. Initially some patients were linked to the Wuhan South China Seafood City (also called the South China Seafood Wholesale Market and the Hua Nan Seafood Market). Chinese health officials have reported thousands of cases in the city of Wuhan and severe illness has been reported, including deaths. Cases have also been identified in travelers from Wuhan to other parts of China and the world, including the Japan, Thailand, United States and Australia. We expect more cases to be confirmed. Person-to-person spread is occurring though it's unclear how easily this virus is spreading between people at this time.

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses. There are several known coronaviruses that infect people and usually only cause mild respiratory disease, such as the common cold. However, at least two previously identified

coronaviruses have caused severe disease — severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) coronavirus and Middle East respiratory syndrome (MERS) coronavirus.

Signs and symptoms

Signs and symptoms of this illness include fever, cough, and difficulty breathing. This novel coronavirus has the potential to cause severe disease and death.

Who is at risk

Preliminary information suggests older adults and people with underlying health conditions or compromised immune systems may be at higher risk of severe illness from this virus. Many characteristics of this novel coronavirus and how it may affect people are still unclear.

In response to this outbreak, Chinese officials are screening travelers leaving the city of Wuhan. Several countries and territories throughout the world are reported to have implemented health screening of travelers arriving from Wuhan.

On arrival to South Africa, travelers from China and other Asian countries may undergo health screening, including having their temperature taken and being asked to fill out a symptom questionnaire. Travelers with signs and symptoms of illness (fever, cough, or difficulty breathing) will have an additional health assessment.

What can travelers do to protect themselves and others?

If you must travel:

- Avoid contact with sick people.
- Avoid animals (alive or dead), animal markets, and products that come from animals (such as uncooked meat).
- Wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitiser if soap and water are not available.
- Older adults and travelers with underlying health issues may be at risk for more severe disease and should discuss travel to Wuhan with their healthcare provider.

If you traveled to Hubei Province, China, including Wuhan, in the last 14 days and feel sick with fever, cough, or difficulty breathing, you should:

- Seek medical care right away. Before you go to a doctor's office or emergency room, call ahead and tell them about your recent travel and your symptoms.
- Avoid contact with others.
- Not travel while sick.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve (not your hands) when coughing or sneezing.
- Wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available.

Clinician information

Healthcare providers should obtain a detailed travel history for patients with fever and respiratory symptoms. For patients with these symptoms who were in Wuhan on or after December 1, 2019 and had onset of illness within two weeks of leaving, consider the novel coronavirus outbreak in China and notify infection control personnel and your local health department immediately. Case definitions and guidelines for patient testing are available at the following link.....