



Information for Paramedics and Ambulance First Responders

There is an outbreak of novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV) in mainland China.

Advice on clinical care of a patient with possible 2019-nCoV infection

If a quarantined person develops serious symptoms, particularly difficulty breathing, they have been advised to:

- Call 000 and advise operators that they are in self-isolation because of possible 2019-nCoV exposure;
- Advise paramedics and ambulance first responders on arrival of their travel or close contact history.

Paramedics and ambulance first responders are advised that they should follow specific Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) requirements (outlined below) while assessing and treating patients in these circumstances, regardless of whether or not respiratory symptoms are present.

General guidance:

- **Contact and droplet precautions** are recommended for **routine care** of patients in quarantine or with suspected or confirmed 2019-nCoV infection.
- **Contact and airborne precautions** are recommended when performing **aerosol generating procedures**, including intubation and cardiopulmonary resuscitation.

Precautions during routine care

Contact and droplet precautions are recommended during routine care of patients in the above circumstances:

- Place a surgical mask on the patient if they have not already done so, unless this will aggravate breathing difficulties;
- Perform hand hygiene before donning gown, gloves, and a surgical mask;
- After the consultation, remove PPE and perform hand hygiene, and wipe contacted/contaminated surfaces with detergent/disinfectant.

Aerosol-Generating Procedures

Aerosol-Generating Procedures (AGPs) include tracheal intubation, non-invasive ventilation, tracheotomy, cardiopulmonary resuscitation, manual ventilation before intubation, and bronchoscopy.

The potential for airborne spread of 2019-nCoV is still unknown, however appropriate care should be taken when performing AGPs.

Nebuliser use should be avoided and alternative administration devices (e.g. spacers) should be used.

Airborne precautions should be used routinely for high-risk AGPs. These include:

- Perform hand hygiene before donning gown, gloves, eye protection and a **P2/N95 respirator, which should be fit checked**;
- After the consultation, remove gown and gloves, perform hand hygiene, and remove eye protection and P2/N95 respirator;
- Do not touch the front of any item of PPE during removal;
- Dispose of the used PPE in a biohazard bag; and
- The room surfaces should be wiped clean with disinfectant wipes by a person wearing gloves, gown and surgical mask.

Use of PPE in Life Threatening Situations

In circumstances where ambulance officers are providing clinical care in life threatening situations (for example, cardiopulmonary resuscitation upon arrival), officers may not have sufficient time to adequately apply airborne precautions. In these circumstances, officers are advised to:

- Use a surgical mask as a minimum precaution;
- At completion of the consultation, remove gloves, perform hand hygiene, remove PPE and perform hand hygiene again;
- Notify your employer if you have had a close contact with a suspected or confirmed case of 2019-nCoV without using appropriate PPE; and
- Seek advice from your local public health authority regarding any need to be isolated and monitored for symptoms of the virus.

Where can I get more information?

For the latest advice, information and resources, go to the Australian Government Department of Health website at www.health.gov.au. You will find information on novel coronavirus symptoms and preventing the spread.

Call the National Coronavirus Health Information Line on 1800 020 080. The line operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week. If you require translating or interpreting services, call 131 450.

The telephone number of your state or territory public health agency is available on the coronavirus page at www.health.gov.au/state-territory-contacts.