

## IDFA Position statement on the Coronavirus (2019-nCoV).

On 30 January 2020, the World Health Organization declared the Coronavirus (2019-nCoV). outbreak a Public Health Emergency of International Concern.

### What is a "novel" coronavirus?

A novel coronavirus (CoV) is a new strain of coronavirus that has not been previously identified in humans. The new, or "novel" coronavirus, now called 2019-nCoV, had not previously detected before the outbreak was reported in Wuhan, China in December 2019.<sup>1</sup>

### Symptoms

As a respiratory illness, infection with 2019-nCoV can cause symptoms including a runny nose, sore throat, cough, and fever. It can be more severe for some people and can lead to breathing difficulties and pneumonia. Older people, and people with pre-existing medical conditions, such as primary or secondary immunodeficiencies, appear to be more vulnerable to becoming severely ill with the virus.

### Public health sector response

The response from the public health sector highlights the fact that the recent Coronavirus (2019-nCoV). outbreak should be taken seriously. Refer to the [Australian Health Sector Emergency Response Plan for Novel Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)

### World Statistics

- ❖ 207,860 confirmed cases
- ❖ 8,657 deaths
- ❖ 166 countries, areas or territories with cases

[See WHO World Map](#)

### Australian situation

As of 19<sup>th</sup> March 2020, Australia has 565 confirmed cases of Coronavirus (2019-nCoV).

Australian Capital Territory	3
New South Wales	265
Northern Territory	0
Queensland	94
South Australia	37
Tasmania	10
Victoria	121
Western Australia	35
<b>Total**</b>	<b>565</b>

- ❖ Of the 565 confirmed cases in Australia, 46 have recovered and 6 have died from COVID-19.
- ❖ 259 cases were considered to be overseas acquired. Most of the overseas cases were acquired in the USA, Iran, Italy and the UK.
- ❖ 72 cases are contacts of previously confirmed cases.
- ❖ The likely place of exposure for 206 reported cases is under investigation.
- ❖ The source of infection for 28 cases is currently unknown.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.who.int/news-room/q-a-detail/q-a-coronaviruses>



## Protecting yourself

### Practice immune deficiency hygiene:

- ❖ **Wash your hands frequently** with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand rub if your hands are not visibly dirty.
- ❖ **Cover mouth and nose** with flexed elbow or tissue **when coughing and sneezing**. Discard tissue immediately into a closed bin and wash your hands as above.
- ❖ **Maintain social distancing**, at least 1 metre (3 feet between yourself and others, particularly those who are coughing, sneezing and have a fever.
- ❖ **Avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth**
- ❖ **Seek medical care** if you have fever, cough and difficulty breathing
- ❖ **Tell your health care provider** if you have travelled in an area in China where 2019-nCoV has been reported, or if you have been in close contact with someone with who has travelled from China and has respiratory symptoms.
- ❖ **Practice general hygiene** measures when visiting live animal markets, wet markets or animal product markets
- ❖ **Handle raw meat, milk or animal organs with care**, to avoid cross-contamination with uncooked foods, as per good food safety practices.
- ❖ **Avoid consuming raw or undercooked animal products.**
- ❖ **Handle raw meat, milk or animal organs with care**, to avoid cross-contamination with uncooked foods, as per good food safety practices.

### Surgical Masks

Surgical masks in the community are only helpful in **preventing people who are infected** with Coronavirus (2019-nCoV). **from spreading it to others**. If you are well, you do not need to wear a surgical mask as there is little evidence supporting the widespread use of surgical masks in healthy people to prevent transmission in public.

If you are being self-isolated due to one of the following circumstances:

- ❖ Return from overseas travel
- ❖ You have been in close contact with a confirmed case of Coronavirus (2019-nCoV).
- ❖ You are in the vulnerable and at risk category

**Then** you should use a surgical mask (if you have one) in the following circumstances:

- ❖ You need to leave your home for any reason and be in public areas;
- ❖ You are visiting a medical facility; or
- ❖ You have symptoms and other people are present in the same room as you.<sup>2</sup>

### Immunoglobulin replacement therapy

Whilst immunoglobulin replacement therapy provides protection against a range of infections, it does not guarantee immunity against Coronavirus (2019-nCoV).

### Vaccination

There is currently no vaccine available. Updating Influenza vaccination to assist in preventing disease with similar symptoms should be discussed with your healthcare specialist.

### Travelling with Immune Deficiency

- ❖ Do not travel internationally.
- ❖ Restrict domestic travel

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This Position Statement has been reviewed and validated by the IDFA Medical Advisory Committee.

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov-information-on-the-use-of-surgical-masks>

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IDFA is monitoring the situation and following developments closely and will continue to update our members as necessary.

### **About IDFA**

IDFA is the peak patient body raising awareness, educating, supporting and advocating for those affected by primary and secondary immune deficiencies in Australia. IDFA collaborates with patients, doctors, politicians, the pharmaceutical industry and other relevant national and international stakeholders.

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