

# Latest recommendations by Scientific Committee on Emerging and Zoonotic Diseases and the Scientific Committee on Infection Control after reviewing cases of novel coronavirus infection

The Scientific Committee on Emerging and Zoonotic Diseases and the Scientific Committee on Infection Control under the Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health today (January 24) convened a joint meeting, during which members reviewed the epidemiological situation of the Mainland and Hong Kong cases of novel coronavirus infection, the risk assessment by the World Health Organization and made the latest recommendations.

At the meeting, members discussed on the corresponding local response to this novel communicable disease in various aspects, including disease prevention and control, surveillance, emergency preparedness, port health measures and health promotion. The latest recommendation are as follows:

1. The general public is strongly advised not to visit places with community transmission of novel coronavirus.
2. The CHP should continue to uphold port health measures to detect possible imported cases into Hong Kong.
3. The general public is advised to wear a surgical mask when taking public transport or staying in crowded places. It is important to wear a mask properly, including hand hygiene before wearing and after removing a mask.
4. Proper infection prevention and control measures should be implemented and reinforced in all settings especially in hospitals.
5. In view of the current available information, organisers of mass gathering events with mixing of people from areas with novel coronavirus transmission are advised to take into consideration of the increased risk arising from the event.
6. Passengers who have stayed in an aircraft within two seats surrounding a confirmed case or on a train in the same row or two rows in front and behind of the case during the symptomatic phase are classified as close contacts for quarantine.
7. Close contacts should be quarantined for 14 days.
8. Confirmed cases can be released from isolation when their clinical conditions improve and afebrile, and with two clinical specimens tested negative for novel coronavirus taken at least 24 hours apart.

To prevent pneumonia and respiratory tract infection, members of the

public should always maintain good personal and environmental hygiene. They are advised to:

- Perform hand hygiene frequently, especially before touching the mouth, nose or eyes; after touching public installations such as handrails or door knobs; or when hands are contaminated by respiratory secretions after coughing or sneezing;
- Maintain drainage pipes properly and regularly (about once a week) pour about half a liter of water into each drain outlet (U-traps) to ensure environmental hygiene;
- Wash hands with liquid soap and water, and rub for at least 20 seconds. Then rinse with water and dry with a disposable paper towel. If hand washing facilities are not available, or when hands are not visibly soiled, performing hand hygiene with 70 to 80 per cent alcohol-based handrub is an effective alternative;
- Cover your mouth and nose with tissue paper when sneezing or coughing. Dispose of soiled tissues into a lidded rubbish bin, then wash hands thoroughly; and
- When having respiratory symptoms, wear a surgical mask, refrain from work or attending class at school, avoid going to crowded places and seek medical advice promptly.

The public should take heed of the health advice below when travelling outside Hong Kong:

- Avoid unnecessary travel to Wuhan of Hubei Province. If it is unavoidable to travel to Wuhan, put on a surgical mask and continue to do so until 14 days after returning to Hong Kong;
- Avoid close contact with persons with fever or respiratory symptoms in countries/areas with possible community transmission of novel coronavirus infection. If it is unavoidable to come into contact with them, put on a surgical mask and continue to do so until 14 days after returning to Hong Kong;
- Avoid visiting hospitals. If it is necessary to visit a hospital, put on a surgical mask and observe strict personal and hand hygiene;
- Avoid touching animals (including game), poultry/birds or their droppings;
- Avoid visiting wet markets, live poultry markets or farms;
- Avoid making close contact with patients, especially those with symptoms of acute respiratory infections;
- Do not consume game meat and do not patronise food premises where game meat is served;
- Adhere to food safety and hygiene rules such as avoiding consuming raw or undercooked animal products, including milk, eggs and meat, or foods which may be contaminated by animal secretions, excretions (such as urine) or contaminated products, unless they have been properly cooked, washed or peeled;
- If feeling unwell when outside Hong Kong, especially if experiencing a fever or cough, wear a surgical mask, inform the hotel staff or tour escort and seek medical advice at once; and
- After returning to Hong Kong, consult a doctor promptly if experiencing a fever or other symptoms, take the initiative to inform the doctor of any

recent travel history and any exposure to animals, and wear a surgical mask to help prevent spread of the disease.