

Coronavirus Update

March 2, 2020

Background

Late in 2019, China identified an outbreak of respiratory illness caused by a newly recognised Coronavirus (Covid-19). Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses that includes five different coronaviruses that are frequent causes of the common cold. However, the family of coronaviruses also includes the viruses responsible for more significant illnesses such as severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) that caused a multinational epidemic in 2003, and Middle East respiratory syndrome (MERS) that has caused repeated outbreaks since 2012.

Covid-19 is spread by droplets from person to person and under ideal conditions, the virus may survive for several days on some surfaces. Symptoms include fever, cough and breathing difficulty and while the majority of cases are mild, approximately 20% may progress to severe lung disease. Currently, the death rate appears low (1-2%). The incubation period (the duration between being exposed and developing symptoms) of Covid-19 is uncertain, with estimates varying from 2 to 14 days. As yet, there is no vaccination available for coronavirus, and there is no coronavirus specific treatment that has been proven to be effective.

Cases have now been identified worldwide and by the end of February 2020, more new cases were being identified on a daily basis outside, than inside China. On February 28, 2020, the first case of proven Covid-19 disease in New Zealand, was reported in a traveller returning from Iran, at Auckland City Hospital.

The World Health Organisation continues to monitor the situation closely and is releasing regular updates. Advice is constantly evolving, so for the latest information please see the websites listed below.

New Zealand Travel Status (March 2, 2020)

Safetravel New Zealand currently advises New Zealanders not to travel to China, and to avoid non-essential travel to Iran. The advice is likely to change in coming days and weeks.

People who travel to New Zealand from or via (excluding airport transit) Category One countries should self-isolate for 14 days following departure from the Category One country and register with Healthline ([0800 358 5453](tel:08003585453)).

- **Category One** countries: China and Iran

People who have travelled from or via Category Two countries (excluding airport transfer) should be alert for Covid-19 symptoms. They do not have to self-isolate if well. They should self-isolate if they develop any symptoms of concern and ring Healthline ([0800 358 5453](tel:08003585453)) if they develop symptoms within 14 days of departing the Category Two country.

- **Category Two** countries: Hong Kong, Italy, Japan, Republic of Korea, Singapore and Thailand

For up to date New Zealand information please see:

- **World Health Organization:**
<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>
- **NZ Ministry of Health:**
<https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/diseases-and-conditions/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov>
<https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/diseases-and-conditions/covid-19-novel-coronavirus/covid-19-novel-coronavirus-health-advice-general-public>
- **Safetravel NZ:**
<https://www.safetravel.govt.nz/news/novel-coronavirus-china-2019-ncov>

Travelling Internationally to Training Camps and Competitions

There remain many unknowns regarding the future spread of Covid-19, and its long-term impact on communities. Individual country responses to Covid-19 are highly variable and will be in constant flux as the Covid-19 situation evolves – it is unclear exactly how each country will respond to regional clusters of Covid-19. It is also unknown how countries will respond to travellers who wish to enter their country. Some countries have already closed their borders to travelers from a range of other countries, and more may follow suit.

Furthermore, airlines are evolving their responses to the Covid-19 situation, with particular consideration of the risks to their employees and passengers. As a result, it is difficult to provide specific advice to individuals and National Sporting Organisations (NSOs) regarding attendance at international locations for training and competition over the next few months.

Important considerations when planning travel over the next few months include:

1. The risk to health of becoming infected with Covid-19
2. The quality and cost of care if unwell in a foreign country
3. The consequences for further travel, training and competition of becoming infected, or potentially being exposed to Covid-19
4. The potential difficulty of attempting to travel from a country in which Covid-19 has been spreading, to another country which is concerned about the potential for travellers from the first country to be the source of infection; even when those travellers themselves are in perfect health.

The following **'Coronavirus Information Framework'** is provided to help NSOs and individuals planning international travel, make an informed decision during the current Coronavirus situation.

General Background

- Where is the travel planned for?
- How many individuals are travelling?
- What is the duration of the travel to different locations?
- What is the proposed flight plan, including any lay-overs and transit points?
- How essential is the travel – are there alternatives?

Travellers' Health

- Do team members have any specific health concerns that increase the chance of catching or having a poor outcome from Covid-19 (e.g. Is anyone specifically immune compromised through known health issues)?
- Do team members have family or others in New Zealand with particular risks should Covid-19 be brought back to New Zealand (e.g. Pregnancy, immune compromised)?
- Are any of the broader travelling group elderly, or young children?
- Are team members well informed, and are there appropriate hand sanitiser / hand wash and hygiene protocols and behaviours established?
- Is anyone on the team currently unwell?
- Does anyone on the team have other concerns regarding travel in the current environment?

International Locations

- What is the current number of confirmed Covid-19 infections in the country / region where travel is planned?
- What is the status of health care facilities, expertise and access in the proposed travel location?
- Are individuals from other countries going to be at the same location/event/accommodation?
- Are individuals from countries currently experiencing Covid-19 outbreaks going to be at the same location/accommodation?
- Is most of 'communal time' going to be indoors or outdoors (indoor locations theoretically favour proximity and virus transmission)?
- What is the nature of the event / training (i.e. Is there a requirement for close contact between individuals)?

Regulatory Considerations

- What is the current advice from the New Zealand Government and the individual country's government regarding travel to that location?
- What is the current advice or regulation from countries that may be visited after the country in question, with regard to travel from that country?
- What advice is available from local event organisers / International Federations or other authorities?
- Does current travel insurance cover health and travel issues associated with Covid-19?

If you have further questions, please reference the websites and New Zealand Ministry of Health links highlighted above. For personal health considerations, your NSO Medical Director or General Practitioner will be able to provide support.

If you are a Tokyo 2020 long list member and have any questions regarding planning for the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games, please refer to the information in the New Zealand Team Hub (app or pc based) or alternatively contact at team@olympic.org.nz or ashley@olympic.org.nz.

Frequently Asked Questions

How do I avoid catching the Coronavirus?

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathrooms, before eating, and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
- If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitiser with at least 60% alcohol. (HPSNZ utilises 'Zoono')
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Avoid animals (alive or dead), animal markets, and products that come from animals (such as uncooked meat).

What are the symptoms of Coronavirus?

- Symptoms of Coronavirus most frequently include fever, cough, shortness of breath and sore throat, but vomiting and diarrhoea may also be present (see <https://www.healthy.org.nz/> for further symptom details).

What do I do if I think I may have Coronavirus?

- If you have symptoms and may have been in contact with someone with Coronavirus, you should phone Healthline's dedicated Covid-19 number 0800 358 5453 (+64 9 358 5453 from overseas) or contact your GP by phone.

Should I be wearing a mask?

- The CDC and other world leading health organisations do not recommend wearing a mask either routinely or when traveling – unless you are sick, to reduce the risk of you transmitting the cause of your illness to others.