

Update on the Wuhan Coronavirus

The number of cases of Wuhan Coronavirus have been growing – what new information is there?

What do We Know about Where the Wuhan Coronavirus Came from?

- Initially it was thought that the coronavirus appeared around December 2019. We now know it has been around since about October 2019 – and possibly earlier.
- As the genetic material in the virus is almost identical to a coronavirus carried by bats, it is now believed it came from bats although exactly how it was passed to humans isn't known.

Do We Know More about How it's Spread?

- The Wuhan coronavirus is almost certainly spread by respiratory droplets – such as when a person with the virus coughs or sneezes.

How Easy is it to Catch the Wuhan Coronavirus?

- It is believed the virus is changing, or mutating, to become more contagious between humans. We know it is up to two weeks before a person has the actual symptoms of the virus and that they are contagious during this time.

How can We Prevent Catching the Wuhan Coronavirus?

- There is no vaccine to protect people from Wuhan Coronavirus yet.
- Prevention is pretty much the same as for any respiratory virus or flu – the emphasis is on stopping droplets containing the virus from entering your own mouth or nose.
- Wash your hands – especially before eating and drinking. If you don't have ready access to soap and water, use an alcohol antibacterial hand wash.
- Don't share items that have touched other people's nose or mouth such as cutlery, cups, lipstick, tissues, wet wipes or cigarettes.
- Stay about one meter away from people who have flu like symptoms - if someone in a lift is coughing or sneezing, don't get in!
- Regularly clean surfaces which are commonly touched by people such as door handles, taps, fridge door and benches.
- If you are going on a plane or ship, take bacterial hand wash and wipes to clean tables.

What Precautions are Being Made to Stop the Spread of the Virus?

- The Government has stopped anyone, except Australian residents, who have been to China within the last 14 days from coming to Australia. Australian residents who are returning home must isolate themselves for a period of 14 days after they return.
- Medical practices and people in health care have been issued with stronger guidelines to prevent the spread of viruses. These will probably become common place from now on.

Should We Avoid Things Made in China?

- The virus only lives a short time outside the body. Anything imported from China will not be contaminated by the virus. However, any imported fresh food should be washed well.

Should We Avoid Places Like Chinese Restaurants?

- You are no more likely to catch a coronavirus in the Chinese restaurant than you are at Aldi.

Are We More Likely to Catch Coronavirus from a Chinese Person?

- The only people at high risk of getting the virus are those who have just returned from China or who are in close contact with someone who has just returned from China.

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