

About COVID-19 (novel coronavirus)

Coronaviruses can make humans and animals sick. Some coronaviruses can cause illness similar to the common cold and others can cause more serious diseases, including severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) and Middle East respiratory syndrome (MERS).

The virus seen in mainland China is called 'novel' because it is new. It has not been detected before this outbreak. Cases of COVID-19 are now being reported in many other countries. It is likely that the virus originally came from an animal and there is now evidence that it can spread from person to person.

Symptoms

Symptoms include (but are not limited to) fever, cough, sore throat, fatigue and shortness of breath.

How the virus spreads

The virus is most likely to spread from person to person through:

- direct contact with a person while they are infectious
- contact with droplets when a person with a confirmed infection coughs or sneezes
- touching objects or surfaces that were contaminated by droplets (like those from a cough or sneeze) from a person with a confirmed infection and then touching your mouth or face.

The length of time that a person is infectious (that is, can spread the infection to others) is not yet known. However, there is evidence of people without any symptoms or with minimal symptoms transmitting the infection to others. It is therefore likely that a person can spread the infection from before the time they first develop symptoms until up to 48 hours after symptoms stop.

Therefore, the Falkland Islands Government is currently recommending an isolation period of 14 days for returned travellers from mainland China, Iran, northern Italy or the Republic of Korea and for anyone who has been in contact with a **confirmed** case.

High-risk populations

Some people who are infected may not get sick at all, some will get mild symptoms from which they will recover easily and others may become very ill, very quickly.

From previous experience with other coronaviruses, the people at highest risk of serious infection are:

- people with compromised immune systems
- elderly people
- pregnant women
- very young children and babies
- people with diagnosed heart and lung conditions.

Preventing the spread of the virus

Practising good hand hygiene and sneeze/cough hygiene is the best defence against most viruses. You should:

- wash your hands frequently with soap and water and dry them well, before and after eating and after going to the toilet
- avoid contact with others (touching, kissing, hugging and other intimate contact)
- cover coughs and sneezes with clean tissues or your elbow and dispose of tissues safely in a bin and then wash your hands
- use alcohol-based hand sanitiser if you aren't able to wash and dry your hands with soap and water.

What to tell staff

Hospitality management should provide information and brief all employees and contract staff, including domestic and cleaning staff, on relevant information and procedures to prevent the spread of coronavirus to people in the hospitality setting.

Hotel guests and COVID-19

The risk of guests who may be infected staying in hotels and lodges is currently very low. It is important that the hotel/lodge provides guests with information about COVID-19 to prevent spread upon their arrival to the hotel.

Guests in self-isolation

If your guests need to self-isolate while they are staying with you, it is important that staff take precautions. The risk to staff should be low if they wash their hands well and the guests do not have symptoms. Staff should avoid close contact with these guests, but it is safe to be in the same room (at a distance) without protective equipment when delivering food, which we recommend that guests have in their room.

Cleaning guidelines

Cleaning staff should avoid close contact with guests who have self-isolated. They should wear gloves while cleaning and use alcohol hand rub before and after wearing gloves. As an added precaution, your cleaning staff may wish to wear a surgical mask while cleaning the room. Before entering the room, cleaning staff may inquire if people are well and ask them to put on a surgical mask.

Guests who become ill

If a person who has self-isolated or has been in a country or area of concern in the past 14 days develops symptoms, they should contact the KEMH on 28000 for further advice and guidance.