Tool box

– Update 16 March 2020

Date:

Workplace:

Name of supervisor or presenter:

Person present:

Name	Signature	Name	Signature

Topics discussed

- What is a coronavirus and how dangerous is it?
- What are the symptoms of coronavirus?
- How does the virus spread?
- Who is most at risk of coronavirus?
- What is close contact?
- What if I have travelled overseas?
- What can I do to protect myself and others?
- How to put on, use, take off and dispose of a mask
- General discussion and hand out information sheets covering the following:
  - International travellers
  - Home isolation guide
  - General FAQ

What is a coronavirus and how dangerous is it?

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses found in both animals and humans. Some infect people and are known to cause illness ranging from the common cold to more severe diseases such as Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS). As with other respiratory illnesses, infection with 2019-nCoV can cause mild symptoms including a runny nose, sore throat, cough, and fever. It can be more severe for some persons and can lead to pneumonia or breathing difficulties. More rarely, the disease can be fatal. Older people, and people with pre-existing medical conditions (such as, diabetes and heart disease) appear to be more vulnerable to becoming severely ill with the virus.

What are the symptoms of COVID-19?

Many people who contract COVID–19 will suffer only mild symptoms. However early indications are that the elderly and people with pre-existing medical conditions are more at risk of experiencing severe symptoms. The most common coronavirus symptoms reported include:

- Fever
- Breathing difficulties such as breathlessness
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Fatigue or tiredness.

How does the virus spread?

- The new coronavirus is a respiratory virus which spreads primarily through contact with an infected person through respiratory droplets generated when a person, for example, coughs or sneezes, or through droplets of saliva or discharge from the nose.
- It may be possible that a person can get infected by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose, or possibly their eyes, but this is <u>not</u> thought to be the main way the virus spreads.
- While it is currently unclear how long the virus can live on surfaces, there is a very low chance of the virus spread from products or packaging, and there is <u>no</u> evidence to support transmission of the virus through imported goods.

Who is most at risk of coronavirus?

Anyone who has been overseas in the past 14 days or is a close or casual contact of a confirmed case of COVID-19 is at the highest risk of infection. If you have been <u>overseas in the past</u> 14 days you must:

- stay at home (self-quarantine).
- avoid public settings - this means you should not attend work, school, childcare or university or go to other public places such as restaurants, cinemas or shopping centres and should not use public transport or taxis.
- do this for 14 days after arriving in Australia (other than when seeking medical care)
- only have people who usually live in the household in the home. Do not allow visitors into the home.
- you should stay in a different room to other people as much as possible.

Elderly or have pre-existing medical conditions:
- Many people will suffer only mild symptoms, however, early indications are that the elderly and people with pre-existing medical conditions such as heart and lung disease are more at risk of experiencing severe symptoms.

Anyone who has had close contact with a confirmed case:
- If you have been in close contact with someone who has COVID-19, stay at home (self-quarantine).

What is close contact?

Close contact means greater than 15 minutes face-to-face or the sharing of a closed space for more than two hours with a confirmed case. A close contact could include any person meeting any of the following criteria:

- living in the same household or household-like setting (for example, a boarding school or hostel)
- direct contact with the body fluids or laboratory specimens of a confirmed case
- a person who spent two hours or longer in the same room
- face-to-face contact for more than 15 minutes with the case in any other setting not listed above.

What if I have travelled overseas?

If you have returned from international travel after midnight 15 March 2020 and begin to feel unwell and develop a fever or shortness of breath, a cough or respiratory illness, you should call the dedicated hotline on 1800 675 398 for advice. This number is staffed 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

What can I do to protect myself and others and reduce my risk of an infection?

- Wash your hands frequently with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand rub if your hands are not visibly dirty. Why? Washing your hands with soap and water or using alcohol-based hand rub eliminates the virus if it is on your hands. Buy an alcohol-based hand sanitiser with over 60 per cent alcohol.
- When coughing and sneezing, cover mouth and nose with flexed elbow or tissue – discard tissue immediately into a closed bin and clean your hands with alcohol-based hand rub or soap and water. Why? Covering your mouth and nose when coughing and sneezing prevent the spread of germs and viruses. If you sneeze or cough into your hands, you may contaminate objects or people that you touch.
- Maintain at least 1 metre (3 feet) distance between yourself and other people, particularly those who are coughing, sneezing and have a fever. Why? When someone who is infected with a respiratory disease, like 2019-nCoV, coughs or sneezes they project small droplets containing the virus. If you are too close, you can breathe in the virus.
- Avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth: Why? Hands touch many surfaces which can be contaminated with the virus. If you touch your eyes, nose or mouth with your contaminated hands, you can transfer the virus from the surface to yourself. If you have fever, cough and difficulty breathing, seek medical care early.
- As a general precaution, practice general hygiene measures when visiting live animal markets, wet markets or animal product markets. Ensure regular hand washing with soap and potable water after touching animals and animal products; avoid touching eyes, nose or mouth with hands; and avoid contact with sick animals or spoiled animal products. Strictly avoid any contact with other animals in the market (e.g., stray cats and dogs, rodents, birds, bats).
- Continue healthy habits: exercise, drink water, get plenty of sleep.
- Avoid consumption of 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.
- If you have mild respiratory symptoms and no travel history to or within China, carefully practice basic respiratory and hand hygiene **and stay home** until you are recovered.
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How to put on, use, take off and dispose of a mask

- Before putting on a mask, wash hands with alcohol-based hand rub or soap and water

- Cover mouth and nose with mask and make sure there are no gaps between your face and the mask
- Avoid touching the mask while using it; if you do, clean your hands with alcohol-based hand rub or soap and water
- Replace the mask with a new one as soon as it is damp and do not re-use single-use masks
- To remove the mask: remove it from behind (do not touch the front of mask); discard immediately in a closed bin; wash hands with alcohol-based hand rub or soap and water

<u>General discussion</u>

While coronavirus(es) is of concern, it is important to remember that most people displaying symptoms such as fever, cough, sore throat or tiredness are likely suffering with a cold or other respiratory illness— <u>not</u> coronavirus.

If you however are in any of these risk categories and begin to feel unwell and develop a fever or shortness of breath, a cough or respiratory illness either during your period of isolation (self-quarantine), or in the 14 days since arriving home from international travel, you should seek immediate medical attention. Call ahead to your GP or emergency department and mention your overseas travel <u>before</u> you arrive at the doctor's office so they can prepare appropriate infection control measures.

Best policy is if you are feeling unwell and you are unsure you **must** ask your supervisor for direction.

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