

HEALTH ADVISORY



Commonwealth Healthcare Corporation

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

“CHCC is Monitoring Outbreak of Coronavirus in Wuhan, China”

The Commonwealth Healthcare Corporation (CHCC) would like to advise the public that we are monitoring the outbreak of illness in Wuhan, China. The disease has been confirmed to have been caused by a novel (new) type of coronavirus. There have been 41 confirmed cases in China and one death in a patient who had significant underlying medical conditions. No additional cases in China have been detected since January 3, 2020. However, as of January 16, two export cases of the disease have been confirmed in people who had recently traveled from Wuhan.

- On January 13, 2020, the Thailand Ministry of Public Health confirmed that a Chinese woman infected with the novel coronavirus traveled from Wuhan to Thailand 5 days earlier.
- On January 16, 2020, the Japanese Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare informed the World Health Organization (WHO) of a confirmed case of a novel coronavirus in a person who recently travelled to Wuhan.

What is Coronavirus?

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses, some causing illness in people and others that affect animals. Very rarely, animal coronaviruses can evolve and infect people. Sometimes they can also spread between people, although it is not confirmed yet whether the virus in China can be transmitted from person to person. Most of the patients in the outbreak in Wuhan have had some link to a large seafood and animal market, suggesting that animals may be the source of this illness.

Ongoing airport and port surveillance and passenger screening facilitated by the CHCC Public Health and Hospital Emergency Preparedness Program (PHEPP) has been expanded to monitor potential export cases of this disease, and the CHCC will continue to monitor the situation closely and keep the public informed if there is an elevated threat level to the CNMI. Given the high number of Chinese tourists who visit the CNMI, there is risk of an imported case.

If you recently traveled to Wuhan and now feel sick, please call your doctor and seek medical attention. Make sure to tell your doctor about your recent travel and describe your symptoms. You should also make sure to cover your nose and mouth while coughing or sneezing, and wash your hands often with soap and water.

Travelers to Wuhan should:

- Avoid animals (alive or dead), animal markets, and products that come from animals (such as uncooked meat).
- Avoid contact with sick people.
- Wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available.

Symptoms

Common human coronaviruses, like the common cold, usually cause mild to moderate symptoms. Most people get infected with these viruses at some point in their lives, and these illnesses usually only last for a short amount of time. Symptoms may include

- Runny nose
- Headache
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Fever
- A general feeling of being unwell

Human coronaviruses can sometimes cause lower-respiratory tract illnesses, such as pneumonia or bronchitis. This is more common in high-risk groups, such as people with weakened immune systems, babies, and older adults.

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