

Questions and Answers on the 2019 Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV) in the University Setting

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**Sub-directorate General for Epidemiological Surveillance and Public Health
Emergency Response**

* This protocol is under constant review according to the evolution and new information available about the disease.



Coordination

Sub-directorate General for Epidemiological Surveillance and Public Health Emergency Response

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Universities in Catalonia are in close contact with the Secretariat of Public Health in the Ministry of Health and share any additional information that may become available.

Canal Salut has information under constant review on the status of the outbreak of coronavirus 2019-nCoV.

<http://canalsalut.gencat.cat/ca/salut-a-z/c/coronavirus-2019-ncov/>

What is a coronavirus?

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses that mostly affect animals. Some of them can be transmitted from animals to people. Clinical signs and symptoms can range from a common cold to more severe diseases, such as the coronavirus that caused severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS-CoV) and the coronavirus that caused Middle Eastern respiratory syndrome (MERS-CoV).

What is 2019-nCoV?

It is a new type of coronavirus that can affect people and was first identified in December 2019 in Wuhan, Hubei Province, China.

What are the symptoms of 2019-nCoV?

The most common symptoms include fever, breathing difficulties, coughing or general malaise. In more severe cases, the infection can cause pneumonia, kidney failure and other complications. The most severe cases usually occur in elderly or underlying condition such as heart disease, lung disease or immune system problems.

How is the infection acquired?

It's unclear the way in which infection is acquired. By analogy to other infections caused by similar viruses, it appears that transmission would be through contact with infected animals or by close contact with respiratory secretions generated by a sick person's cough or sneeze. These secretions would infect another person if they came in contact with that person's nose, eyes, or mouth.

Is the infection highly contagious?

Direct contact of the respiratory secretions of an infected animal or infected person with the mucous membranes of another person (nose, mouth, eyes) is required for the infection to occur. Airborne transmission over distances greater than two metres seems unlikely.

Is there a treatment for 2019-nCoV?

There is currently no specific treatment for the novel coronavirus. However, there are many treatments to control the symptoms so health care may improve the prognosis.

What can I do to protect myself?

At the moment, there have been no cases of the novel coronavirus in Catalonia, but there is the possibility of importing cases originating from travellers coming from Hubei Province in China.

The general personal protection measures to prevent coronavirus 2019-nCoV infection are the same as those to prevent flu or any other similar acute respiratory infection:

- Regularly wash your hands with soap and water (at least 20 seconds) or alcoholic solutions, especially after direct contact with sick people or their environment.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with dirty hands.
- Avoid close contact with people who show signs of a respiratory condition, such as coughing or sneezing.
- Avoid sharing food or utensils (cutlery, glasses, napkins, etc.) and other objects without first cleaning them properly.
- Stay at least two metres away from people with symptoms of acute respiratory infection.
- Cover your mouth and nose with tissues or the crook of your elbow when you cough or sneeze and wash your hands afterwards.
- Regularly wash and disinfect objects and surfaces.

If I travel to China, am I running any risks?

Since the WHO has declared the outbreak of the novel coronavirus as a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC), **it is advisable to avoid unnecessary travel to affected areas of China.**

The Chinese authorities have taken measures restricting the mobility and movement of people in Hubei Province in China.

What should I do if I am planning to do an exchange and/or study for a degree in China?

Given the situation in China in general and the fact that the WHO has declared the outbreak of the novel coronavirus as a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC), it is advisable to monitor the situation and see how it evolves in the coming months.

At present it is best to avoid travel to China.

What should I do if I have come back from China?

If your overall state of health is good, you can lead a normal life in general with your family or friends and in the education setting.

However, monitor your health status for the fortnight after your trip and **if you have respiratory symptoms such as fever, breathing difficulties, coughing or general malaise, stay at home and call the health services to tell them you have been in China or call 061. It is important that you tell them about the trip you have just made and about any symptoms you have because they will be able to assess whether you should remain in isolation at home or not, and they will also give you instructions about what you should do.**

General recommendations to prevent the transmission of infectious diseases for students, lecturers and other university staff

- **When you cough or sneeze, cover your mouth and nose with a tissue.** You should not cover your mouth and nose with your hand when you cough or sneeze as the viruses stay on your hand, and if you touch the surface of a table, a railing, etc. they may remain active for a while.
- **Keep your hands clean, wash them with soap and water for about 20 seconds, and wash them thoroughly after coughing or sneezing.**
- **Dry your hands with disposable paper towels.**
- **Keep dirty or contaminated hands away from the mucous membranes of the eyes, nose and mouth.**
- **Ventilate enclosed spaces** (classrooms, offices, common areas, etc.) for at least 15 minutes a day.
- **Regularly clean and disinfect hard surfaces with the usual products, especially ones that are frequently used by students** and ones that come into contact with the hands (pencils, tables, computer keyboards and mice, door handles, etc.).
- **Regularly clean** tables, chairs and all common areas in general.
- **Avoid sharing** glasses, cutlery, toothbrushes and other objects that may have come in contact with saliva or secretions.

If you have any questions, you can call 061 or refer to <http://canalsalut.gencat.cat/ca/salut-a-z/c/coronavirus-2019-ncov/>

This document is based on *Preguntas y respuestas sobre el nuevo coronavirus (2019-nCoV)* ('Questions and Answers on the Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV)' by the Health Alert and Emergency Coordination Centre in the Ministry of Health, Consumer Affairs and Social Welfare.