

INFORMATION FOR CUSTOMERS

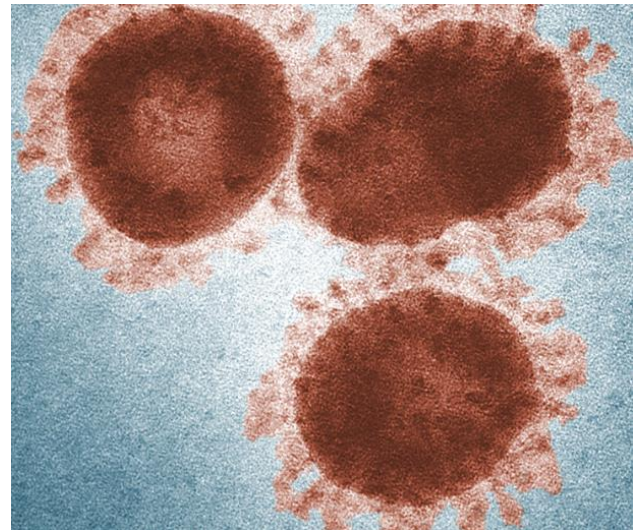
CHINA: NEW FORM OF CORONAVIRUS



Our recommendations for routine procedures (last updated 25 February 2020)

KEY POINTS IN BRIEF

In December 2019, cases of a lung disease emerged in the city of WUHAN (CHINA) which subsequently spread, first within China itself, then leading to further cases of the disease in Asia, Australia, the USA and Europe. Cases of infection with a new form of coronavirus (2019-nCoV) have now also been detected in northern Italy. The routes of infection between human beings have since been established; strict observance of personal hygiene thus constitutes the best means of protection against infection. The WHO has declared a global health emergency.



number of cases and fatalities, updated daily, can be seen [here](#).

WHY IS THIS VIRUS DANGEROUS?

Coronaviruses occur throughout the world and are transmitted primarily by droplet infection. Infected persons primarily exhibit infections of the respiratory tract. A specific treatment or vaccine against coronaviruses does not exist. An antigen assay (PCR) does however exist by which a potential infection can be detected rapidly. A range of hygiene measures and the isolating of infected individuals are possible preventive measures. Coronaviruses are a family of viruses capable of causing disease primarily in vertebrates. In isolated cases, an infection may spread from the animal kingdom to human beings. Epidemics of coronaviruses in recent years include the SARS and MERS epidemics.

The average incubation period is 7 (2-14) days. Human beings are presumed already infectious during the incubation period. Infections between humans have now been confirmed; personnel in the medical services have also become infected. Typical symptoms of the disease resemble those of colds, such as fever, coughing, shortness of breath, and in some cases pneumonia. The individuals known to have died from the disease were for the greater part aged over 40, and were generally already suffering from further conditions. The

WHICH COUNTRIES ARE AFFECTED?

The origin of the epidemic lay in Wuhan in the Chinese region of Hubei. Following transmission as a result of international travel, cases of the virus have since been diagnosed in Thailand, Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, Macau, Hong Kong, Singapore, Vietnam, the USA, France, Australia, Italy and Germany.

Since 23 January 2020, the Chinese authorities have imposed travel restrictions for further cities. At present, it not possible to leave the country routinely by train, air, bus or ferry.

PRECAUTIONARY MEASURES IN PLACE AT THE PRESENT TIME

On 30 January 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the coronavirus epidemic a "**global health emergency**". It has declared such a crisis measure in other cases in the past, including those of Ebola, Zika and swine flu, when a pandemic

disease threatened several countries and a coordinated international response was necessary. Declaration of an international emergency generally results in greater financial and other resources being made available. It can however also result in travel and trade restrictions being imposed.

The WHO's recommendations for action are not legally binding. Governments continue to act under their own sovereignty. The measures they take at national level may differ widely, according to the crisis in the country concerned. In extreme cases, measures include travel restrictions for entire countries, or for specific risk groups, such as pregnant women in the case of the Zika virus. The recommendations of the WHO however also often include specific information on what measures should not be taken, owing to their being unscientific or unnecessary. The WHO recommendations are intended to prevent both overreaction and an inadequate response on the part of governments. The recommendations will follow in the coming weeks, geared to specific countries.

A tightening of surveillance measures (such as temperature scanners at airports) must be anticipated.

Owing to the flu season currently being underway in the northern hemisphere, the coronavirus (nCoV) is occurring at the same time as influenza viruses which exhibit symptoms similar to it. An influenza vaccination aids in reducing the number of unnecessary false suspected cases of coronavirus. Have yourself vaccinated with the current 2019/2020 influenza vaccine now, if you have not already done so.

In the view of health experts, the risk to the population in Germany continues to be low. In order for infections to be avoided, the following recommendations are made for behaviour in the areas affected by the outbreak and during travel to these areas and following return from them: Pay particular attention to good personal hygiene. In particular:

- Wash your hands thoroughly and regularly.

- In outbreak areas, wear face masks when in public spaces.
- Sneeze into the crook of your elbow, not into your hand.
- Avoid contact with persons suffering from diseases of the respiratory tract.
- Avoid markets on which living or dead animals are sold.
- Avoid contact in general with animals, their excrement, and surfaces that have come into contact with dead animals or untreated animal foodstuffs.
- Consume animal food produce (eggs, meat, etc.) only when it has been well heated.
- Observe strict hygiene measures in the kitchen to prevent cross-contamination when preparing foods.

SUMMARY

Travel to CHINA should still be avoided.

Non-essential travel to CHINA and other outbreak areas should be postponed.

Before travelling, obtain information on possible changes in entry regulations and precautionary measures in your destination country at:

<http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de>-> Sicher reisen -> Reisen und Gesundheit, or consult your occupational physician.

Countries with personnel still in China should register them on the **Elefand** list of German citizens maintained by the responsible German mission abroad at <https://elefand.diplo.de/elefandextern/home/login?form.action>. The German foreign office is planning to conduct special evacuation flights periodically in conjunction with other EU member states.

Should work-related travel to an outbreak area be unavoidable, travellers should take the following items with them:

- **FFP2/FFP3 face masks, ideally with the N95 suffix**

- **Sterillium Virugard hand disinfectant**
- **Disinfectant wipes for disinfecting surfaces**

Contact the responsible state authorities in advance to ascertain whether and under what conditions travel to the area concerned is in fact permitted. (The website pages of the German foreign office provide more information for this purpose.)

Should you suffer from sneezing, coughing, fever or shortness of breath at your destination:

- **You must not travel whilst you are still ill.**
- **Consult a doctor, after first making an appointment by telephone.**
- **Should you fall ill with the symptoms described above during your return flight, report to the cabin crew or airport personnel.**

Should the symptoms described above occur following your return from the affected areas (within the first 14 days):

- **Inform the responsible public health office.**
- **Alternatively, visit a hospital in order for a coronavirus infection to be ruled out or isolation measures to be taken swiftly, and the pathogen to be prevented from spreading unnecessarily.**
- **Before visiting the hospital, inform it by telephone of your intended attendance and of your travel history and symptoms.**
- **Avoid unnecessary contact with other persons.**

Travellers returning from the Chinese mainland who are not exhibiting symptoms of the disease are currently placed in quarantine for 14 days following their return. Should symptoms of the disease arise, the necessary PCR assays are

conducted by the responsible public health office. Universal screening of personnel in companies and public bodies is not intended and would not be beneficial, since the test may yield a negative result during the incubation phase even if the individual concerned is infected.

Further information (updated daily) can be found under the following links:

[Travel and safety information issued by the German foreign office](#)
[Robert Koch Institute, Berlin](#)
[European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control \(ECDC\), Solna, Sweden](#)
[Centers of Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\), USA](#)
[World Health Organization \(WHO\)](#)
[Royal Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene \(RSTMH\)](#)

Mail and goods received from China

Based upon observations by the IATA, WHO and CDC, these can generally be regarded as non-critical, since the virus rapidly dries out and dies off once its aerosol envelope is lost. Care must however be taken when biological substances are imported. The import checks for such substances have been tightened. Goods in shipping containers are generally in transit for around three months between China and Europe, and do not present a hazard.

Do you have further questions to this topic? Your occupational physician will be happy to provide further advice.