



## WHO Information Network for Epidemics FAQs for the Travel and Tourism Sector

27 JAN 2020 – 17:00 CET

The latest WHO travel advice is available here: <https://www.who.int/ith/en/>

### TRAVELLING IN AND FROM COUNTRIES & AREAS WITH ONGOING TRANSMISSION

#### HOW CAN I PROTECT OTHERS AND MYSELF WHILE TRAVELLING?

With the information currently available for the novel coronavirus, WHO advises that measures to limit the risk of exportation of the disease should be implemented, without unnecessary restrictions of international traffic

##### Before you depart:

- Avoid travelling if you have a fever and cough
- If you have a fever, cough and difficulty breathing seek medical attention and share previous travel history with your health care provider

##### If travelling by air, ship and train:

- Avoid close contact with anyone that has a fever and cough
- Frequently clean hands by using alcohol-based hand rub or soap and water
- Avoid touching eyes, nose or mouth
- When coughing and sneezing cover mouth and nose with flexed elbow or tissue – throw tissue away immediately and wash hands
- If you choose to wear a facemask, be sure to cover mouth AND nose. Avoid touching the mask once it's on, immediately discard single-use mask after each use and wash hands after removing masks
- If you feel sick or you see somebody sick on board an aircraft, inform plane crew
- If you have signs and symptoms suggestive of acute respiratory illness such as fever, cough and difficulty breathing during and after travel, seek medical care early and share previous travel history with your health care provider.
- Avoid spitting.
- Eat only well-cooked food. Travelers may carry their own food during travel and transit
- Avoid close contact and travel with animals that are sick.

## TRAVELLING IN AND FROM COUNTRIES & AREAS WITHOUT ONGOING TRANSMISSION

### HOW CAN I PROTECT OTHERS AND MYSELF WHILE TRAVELLING?

People who are travelling in and from countries & areas without ongoing transmission must practice usual precautions:

- Avoid close contact (1m distance) with anyone that has a fever and cough
- Frequently clean hands by using alcohol-based hand rub or soap and water
- Avoid touching eyes, nose or mouth
- When coughing and sneezing cover mouth and nose with flexed elbow or tissue – throw tissue away immediately and wash hands

### CAN I TRAVEL? AND WHAT DO I DO IF I BECOME SICK WHILE TRAVELLING?

- Stay informed through the latest [Travel advice](#) issued by WHO
- Avoid travel if you have a fever and cough before departure.
- If you develop respiratory illness during or after travel, you should seek medical attention early and share travel history with your health care provider.

### IS IT SAFE TO TRAVEL TO CHINA?

WHO has not issued any restrictions on travel to China. However travellers are advised to practice usual precautions to reduce the risk of respiratory infections:

- Avoid close contact (1m distance) with anyone that has a fever and cough
- Frequently clean hands by using alcohol-based hand rub or soap and water
- Avoid touching eyes, nose or mouth
- When coughing and sneezing cover mouth and nose with flexed elbow or tissue – throw tissue away immediately and wash hands
- If you have fever, cough and difficulty breathing seek medical care early and share previous travel history with your health care provider
- When visiting live markets in areas currently experiencing cases of nCoV, avoid direct unprotected contact with live animals and surfaces in contact with animals;
- The consumption of raw or undercooked animal products should be avoided. Raw meat, milk or animal organs should be handled with care, to avoid cross-contamination with uncooked foods, as per good food safety practices.

Travelers are advised to contact their doctors or national health authorities for supplementary information as individual countries may adapt WHO recommendations to take into account national considerations.

## TRAVEL AND TOURISM SECTOR

### HOW CAN THE TRAVEL AND TOURISM SECTOR PROVIDE ACCURATE INFORMATION TO TRAVELERS?

WHO recommends health authorities work with travel, transport and tourism sectors to provide travelers with information to reduce the general risk of acute respiratory infections via travel health clinics, travel agencies, conveyance operators and at points of entry. The [latest guidance issued by WHO](#) is available online.

### WHAT IF A TRAVELLER HAS SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS INDICATING ACUTE RESPIRATORY INFECTION?

If a traveler on board of an aircraft/a ship has signs and symptoms indicative of acute respiratory infections the information can be registered using:

- the model of Maritime declaration of health (Annex 8 of IHR) or
- the health part of the aircraft general declaration (Annex 9 of IHR)

and submitted to Point of Entry health authorities when required.

In addition, a passenger locator form can be used on a plane to collect contact information for passengers – this can be used for follow-up if necessary. Travelers should also be encouraged to self-report if they feel ill. The cabin crew should follow the operational procedures recommended by International Air Transport Association (IATA) with regard to managing suspected communicable disease on board an aircraft.

### UNDER THE INTERNATIONAL HEALTH REGULATIONS (2005) - WHAT IS RECOMMENDED AT POINTS OF ENTRY?

Countries should ensure that:

- there are trained staff and adequate equipment in place at points of entry for assessing and managing ill travelers detected before travel, on board planes and ships and on arrival at points of entry;
- there are mechanisms to communicate information on ill travelers between the mode of transport (plane of boat) and points of entry as well as between points of entry and national health authorities;
- there is safe transportation available for symptomatic travelers to hospitals or places where they can be further assessed for care;
- there is a functional public health emergency plan at points of entry to respond to public health events

### WHY DOES WHO NOT RECOMMEND TRAVEL RESTRICTIONS?

WHO does not usually recommend travel restrictions. Restricting the movement of people and goods during public health emergencies is not generally seen to help. Such restrictions may interrupt needed aid and technical support, may disrupt businesses, and may have negative effects on economies of countries affected by the emergencies, a double whammy for such countries who already suffer from the burden of the disease itself. Maintaining international traffic during emergencies is thus important to allow for the free movement of goods, supplies and logistics necessary for responding to the outbreak in countries affected by the emergencies, to allow for international coordinated response activities to be implemented, and for businesses to maintain continuity.

Travel restrictions can cause social disruption, increase anxiety and usually need a lot of resources to implement.

The IHR are a set of legally binding procedures/regulations for 196 States Parties, which aim precisely at reducing the international spread of diseases, while unnecessary interfering with international traffic. Under this binding international law, countries are required to report to WHO the public health rationale for implementing such restrictions, and WHO is obliged to share such information about such measures with other States Parties. In certain circumstances, and in very special situations measures that restrict movement of people may prove temporarily useful, particularly in situation with intense transmission of the disease through close contact with sick people; such situations may include increased public health risks through importation of the disease in settings with limited response capacities and capabilities, high intensity of the transmission in vulnerable populations; in such situations, a risk and cost-benefit analysis should be done by each country before implementing such restrictions to assess whether the benefits of travel restrictions could outweigh the costs.

### DOES WHO RECOMMEND SCREENING AT AIRPORTS?

- The evidence from the past outbreaks shows that effectiveness of entry screening is uncertain, but it may support risk communication strategy by providing information to travelers from affected countries/areas to reduce the general risk of acute respiratory infections, and to seek medical attention early if they develop symptoms compatible with the infection.
- During the current outbreak with the novel coronavirus 2019-nCoV, a number of exported cases were detected through entry screening implemented by some countries. Symptomatic cases may be detected through temperature screening at Point of Entry, for whom medical examination and laboratory tests will be conducted for confirmation. Temperature screening to detect potential suspect cases at Point of Entry may miss travelers incubating the disease or travelers concealing fever during travel and may require substantial investments. A focused approach targeting direct flights from affected areas could be more effective and less resource demanding.
- Currently the northern hemisphere (and China) is in the midst of the winter season when Influenza and other respiratory infections are prevalent. When deciding implementation of entry screening, countries need to take into consideration that travelers with signs and symptoms suggestive of respiratory infection may result from respiratory diseases other than 2019-nCoV, and that their follow-up may impose an additional burden on the health system. National policy and capacities should be taken into account during the decision-making process.
- If entry screening is implemented, temperature screening should always be accompanied by dissemination of risk communication messages at Points of Entry. This can be done through posters, leaflets, electronic bulletin, etc, aiming at raising awareness among travelers about signs and symptoms of the disease, and encouragement of health care seeking behavior, including when to seek medical care, and report of their travel history.
- Countries implementing temperature screening are encouraged to establish proper mechanism for data collection and analysis, e.g. numbers of travelers screened and confirmed cases out of screened passengers, and method of screening

### INFORMATION LINKS

2019-NCov website: <https://www.who.int/health-topics/coronavirus>

Event update (Disease Outbreak News): <https://www.who.int/csr/don/en/>

Updated Travel Advice <https://www.who.int/ith/2020-24-01-outbreak-of-Pneumonia-caused-by-new-coronavirus/en/>