

# CORONAVIRUS

NIGHT NURSE MEDICAL DIRECTIVE : ADVISORY  
EFFECTIVE 2/4/20

## CORONAVIRUS SCREENING PROTOCOL - NIGHT NURSE TRIAGE RNS

- Health authorities are closely watching an outbreak of respiratory illness caused by a new virus that originated in China. Governments are stepping up surveillance of airline passengers from central and mainland China and taking other steps to try to control the outbreak.

As information is acquired, the geography may change.

- **RNs:** Ask ALL callers about travel in past 2 weeks to CHINA and/or exposure to close contacts who have traveled from China in last 14 days (whether the close contact was ill, OR asymptomatic).
- RNs will screen all callers for respiratory and URI symptoms of nCoV concern and follow this protocol for symptomatic and asymptomatic persons, to identify persons at risk. (persons under investigation)
- RN Triager will Contact the patient's State Department of Health to report any persons at risk, or of concern, following this protocol.

<https://www.cdc.gov/publichealthgateway/healthdirectories/healthdepartments.html>

- **Coronavirus Symptoms:**  
Early common symptoms include a runny nose, headache, cough, sore throat, a general feeling of being unwell, and fever. As the disease progresses shortness of breath, chills and body aches are associated with more dangerous stages of coronavirus infection, according to the U.S.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. In serious cases, these latter symptoms can reflect pneumonia, and its complications.

- **NOTE:** Some people with Coronavirus infection may have **no symptoms**.

## BACKGROUND

- Common human coronaviruses, usually cause mild to moderate upper-respiratory tract illnesses, like the common cold. Most people get infected with these viruses at some point in their lives. These illnesses usually only last for a short amount of time.
- Human coronaviruses can sometimes cause lower-respiratory tract illnesses, such as pneumonia or bronchitis. This is more common in people with cardiopulmonary disease, weakened immune systems, infants, and older adults.

## THE NEW 2019-nCoV

is identified as a novel virus of the coronaviridae: Scientists have identified it as a new coronavirus. The name comes from the Latin word for crowns or halos, which coronaviruses resemble under a microscope.

The coronavirus family has many types that affect people. Some cause the common cold while others originating in bats, camels, civet cats, and other animals have evolved into more severe illnesses such as SARS — severe acute respiratory syndrome — or MERS — Middle East respiratory syndrome.

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—2019 nCoV continued—

- The Wuhan pneumonia outbreak is linked to novel coronavirus in China that has caused more than 400 deaths there and approaching 20,000 infections (mostly in China), as of 2/4/20, some severe, as well as exported cases in other countries.
- Coronaviruses are thought to spread through coughing or sneezing, or contacting infectious secretions. Chinese health officials say they believe the illness first spread from animals to people. They now say it can spread between people. Scientists now believe it can spread from person to person in close contact, through the respiratory route.

**THE CDC HAS OUTLINED RECOMMENDATIONS FOR HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS IN THE UNITED STATES.**

- Clinicians are required to obtain a travel history for all patients presenting with a febrile illness. Particularly, in this current environment as a triage service, **Night Nurses will obtain a travel and exposure history for ALL callers.**

All patients who meet any of the following criteria should be evaluated as a person at risk, under investigation:

- Fever and symptoms of lower respiratory illness (e.g., cough, shortness of breath) and in the last 14 days before symptom onset had a history of travel from China OR Close contact with a person with a history of travel from China in the last 14 days, whether that person is asymptomatic, or was under investigation for 2019-nCoV while that person was ill.

- Fever or symptoms of lower respiratory illness (e.g., cough, shortness of breath) and in the last 14 days before symptom onset, had close contact with a laboratory-confirmed 2019-nCoV patient or traveler.

## Coronavirus Protocol-Triage Screening Questions

### 1. **TRAVEL:**

Ask **ALL** callers if they have traveled in the past 2 weeks (14 days) from China.

If traveled to China--Where?

If the person has traveled **anywhere in China** and especially to a known high risk area--currently identified as:

- WUHAN CITY, CHINA,
- EZHOU, CHINA
- and/or HUANGGANG CHINA

**RN Triager: This is a person at risk under investigation concern for 2019-nCoV.** Screen for fever and/or respiratory and URI symptoms and follow this protocol's guidelines for symptomatic **OR** asymptomatic patients.

### 2. **EXPOSURE:**

Ask **ALL** callers about any exposure to a close contact with travel history from **anywhere within China**, in the last 14 days.

**RN Triager: This is a person at risk under investigation concern for 2019-nCoV.** Screen for fever and/or respiratory and URI symptoms and follow this protocol's guidelines for symptomatic **OR** asymptomatic patients.

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### **GO TO OTHER PROTOCOL:**

- If NO travel from China in the past 14 days and NO exposure to a close contact that traveled from China in the last 14 days, RN Triage document:  
"Negative 2019 Corona Screen" or "Neg19CoVScreen."
- Document this on the triage encounter report in the Medical/Surgical History field.

## **SYMPTOMATIC PATIENTS**

Obtain patient's location and call back number.

### **STEP 1: RN-CALL 911 NOW TO ARRANGE EMS TRANSPORT —IF PATIENT MEETS CDC CRITERIA:**

Call city's EMS crew for transport to HOSPITAL.

- **RN-NOTIFY BOTH EMS AND HOSPITAL WITH ER EXPECT:**

*"Respiratory symptoms and travel from China (or) Respiratory symptoms and exposure to close contact that traveled from China. Concern for Coronavirus."*

- Fever and acute respiratory illness:  
Signs and symptoms of lower respiratory illness  
(e.g. cough, shortness of breath) AND travel from China in last 2 weeks before symptom onset.
- Fever **OR** symptoms of lower respiratory illness  
(e.g., cough, shortness of breath) and travel from China in last 2 weeks.
- **If meets any CDC criteria above-Refer patient to Hospital via EMS transport.**

- **INSTRUCT PATIENT** to stay where they are, and **NOT** to leave that location until they receive a callback or transport arrives, and to be ready to answer calls.
- **DOCUMENTATION** If any of the criteria are flagged (respiratory illness **AND** travel from China and/or respiratory illness and close contact traveled from China) please document:

*"Respiratory symptoms AND travel to China, concern for Coronavirus OR*

*"Respiratory symptoms AND exposure-Close contact travel from China, Coronavirus concern."*

## **RECOMMEND SELF-ISOLATION AND REVIEW BY STATE BOARD OF HEALTH**

- Patient has **NO symptoms or MILD symptoms** AND Exposure: Close contact to a person at risk, who traveled from China in last 2 weeks, whether the close contact was symptomatic **OR** asymptomatic.
- Patient has **NO symptoms or MILD symptoms** AND Exposure: Close contact to a laboratory confirmed 2019-nCoV (novel Coronavirus) patient.

### **RN STEP 2: STATE BOARD OF HEALTH NOTIFICATION**

- RN-Contact the patient's State Board of Health to report any patients meeting criteria for persons at risk, or under investigation whether patient is **symptomatic or asymptomatic**.
- **Care Advice: Instruct patient to self-isolate**, and be prepared to do so for 14 days.

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—Step 2 continued—

- Stay isolated at home with all household members until you are contacted by the health department with advice. No visitors, but food can be handed across an entryway.

**Patient: Wear a mask.** Wearing a mask may keep a person who is coughing and infected from readily spreading infection to others, but masks probably won't reliably help people in close contact who are not yet infected in the household, from acquiring infection. Household contacts may wear masks at their option.

Staying >6 feet away from close contacts may be helpful.

- Report any new symptom, respiratory symptoms and/or fever to patient's PCP. Most people who acquire the illness will not require hospitalization or treatment. The aim of self isolation is to keep the community protected, while patient gets better on their own.
- **Advise Caller:** RN will contact the State Board of Health and PCP will receive a report of the patient's triage encounter and patient instruction given. DPH will provide follow up with patient, and determine quarantine time.

Instruct patient to call doctor's office with an update for any worsening or new symptoms.

- RN: Notify DPH NOW and document on report.

**RN STEP 3: RN NOTIFY PCP OFFICE AND /OR MD ON CALL AFTER-HOURS WITH INSTRUCTIONS TO ON-CALL MD TO ALERT THE PCP AND OFFICE.**

## IF Symptoms Develop while Patient is Quarantined

- If any new symptom(s) develop in next 14 days of self-isolation, patient may need to be seen and examined at either PCP office or hospital, at the PCP's discretion.
- Both PCP office and/or hospital will need to be alerted to situation in advance, to provide protection for other patients and health care staff.
- **Instruct Patient: Do not directly go to hospital or PCP office, without first providing notification.**
- Instruct Patient to report any new symptoms to PCP and/or DPH for patient care advice and instructions.

**TRIAGER:** If any new symptoms develop **CONSULT ON CALL MD** for MD patient care instruction and disposition recommendation.

**TRIAGER-Call EMS for the patient,** to arrange transport now **IF the patient is in severe respiratory distress:**

- Triager-Notify EMS of Coronavirus Concern.
- Triager-Notify ER of Patient Expect Concern-Coronavirus.

**If NO severe respiratory distress:**

- Nurse consults MD On-Call for disposition recommendation.
- If evaluation is recommended by MD, advise patient to wear a mask.
- If no mask is available, **instruct patient to wait in car** in parking lot outside the ER or office, and a HCP will bring a mask out to the patient.

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**If MD recommends patient evaluation:**

- Notify ER of Patient Expect Concern- Coronavirus- OR
- Triager, ask MD if triager is needed to call office to notify of patient expect concern- Coronavirus, or MD will notify.
- RN Notify PCP Office and /or MD On Call After-Hours with instructions to on-call MD to alert the PCP and Office.

## **Negative Coronavirus Screen**

Asymptomatic AND No Travel to China in last 14 days and No close contact with traveler from China in last 14 days (No greater CoV risk)  
Negative Coronavirus Screen. Reassure concerns.

- Respiratory Symptoms and/or fever AND No Travel to China in last 14 days and No close contact travel to China in last 14 days (No greater CoV risk) Negative Coronavirus Screen.
- **Go to Other Protocol**  
(e.g, colds, influenza, fever, cough, etc).

If sick with URI virus but not at risk for nCoV, be respectful and stay home from school and work to avoid infecting other students and/or co-workers, and wash your hands frequently.

**CDC Info Line-Extended hours for 2019 novel coronavirus questions only:**

**800-232-4636**

Mon-Fri. 8am-11:00pm ET,  
Sat-Sun. 9:00am-5:00pm ET

**MA Dept. of Public Health**

**617-983-6800**

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