

Date: 16 March 2020

To: All SLSNZ clubs and members

From: Gary Payinda – SLSNZ Medical Director

Subject: COVID-19 (novel coronavirus)

COVID-19 (novel coronavirus) - What you need to know.

As of today, New Zealand has had eight confirmed cases of COVID-19. New Zealand does not yet have COVID-19 circulating in communities. However, a low to moderate risk of potential spread into communities remains. Information and responses to COVID-19 are changing almost daily, so it is important that we all remain aware of the potential risks and handling requirements for any potentially infectious patient.

If you have any cold or flu symptoms, protect others by [staying home](#) until your symptoms resolve.

To reduce the general risk of respiratory infection:

- avoid close contact with people suffering acute respiratory infections
- avoid touching your face with your hands
- wash hands frequently, especially after contact with ill people or their environment
- people with symptoms of acute respiratory infection should practice cough etiquette:
 - maintain 2m social distance
 - cover coughs and sneezes with disposable tissues or clothing,
 - wash hands regularly for at least 20 seconds
- avoid public gatherings if/when community infections occur
- avoid unnecessary indoor meetings

SLSNZ Events

Unless the government, or any agency of the government requests a ban on sports or other social or community events, and so long as there is no report of community infections, SLSNZ events will be permitted for the time being. However these meetings/gatherings may be subject to cancellation with limited notification.

Guidelines for handling infectious patients.

As you would for ANY medical patient with infectious symptoms (cough, cold, fever, etc.), limit exposure:

- Have the patient wear a mask.
- Stay outdoors if possible, rather than in enclosed indoor spaces. A two metre separation is encouraged.
- Wear a mask, goggles, and gloves.
- Avoid all unnecessary suctioning, high-flow oxygen delivery, and bag-valve-mask ventilation, as such interventions create aerosols.

These are best practices for treating ANY infectious patient, whether novel coronavirus, or "regular" influenza. Involve the ambulance service ASAP. Remember to practice good hand hygiene routinely, avoid touching your face with your hands, and ensure you are immunised, so you don't unwittingly spread preventable diseases to others.

Travel Restrictions

The NZ government has recently placed temporary [travel restrictions](#) on all travellers from Mainland China and Iran. Additionally, if you have recently visited and/or transited through [any other country](#), other than a [pacific](#)

[island nation](#) you are requested to register with Healthline (0800 358 5453) and self-isolate for 14 days starting from the date of departure from the day you last visited that country.

For all queries relating to this Memo, please contact Ross Merrett, Safety, Welfare & Risk Manager @ ross.merrett@surflifesaving.org.nz