Coronavirus – what you need to know

While we are still learning more about this new virus – we do know the risk of the virus spreading in New Zealand is very low

How worried should I be?

- Your chances of catching the coronavirus in New Zealand are very low.

- It is highly unlikely you will catch the virus

  – walking down the street,

  – in a supermarket or

  – on public transport.

- Coronavirus is slightly more infectious than the flu – you are only likely to catch it if you are close to someone with the virus. Most people catch the virus from someone at home, a close workmate or someone they spend time with.

- People will not be moving around the community if they are suspected of having the virus – they will be in isolation. Their family and anyone they may have infected will also be asked to stay at home.

How serious is coronavirus?

- People are being infected, mainly in China, but only a very small number have died.

- Most people have a mild illness.

- People of all ages are being infected, but older people and those with medical conditions seem most likely to get seriously ill.

How do I protect myself and my family?

Everyone should protect themselves from the virus, as you would for the flu –

- Washing your hands regularly, or using hand sanitiser, is the best way to avoid this illness.

- As with other illnesses, do not go to work or school if you are sick.

- Cover coughs and sneezes with tissues or clothing, and wash hands afterwards

- Avoid being close to people who are sick

- Wear a mask only if you are coughing and sneezing.

- Washing your hands often and covering coughs and sneezes will do more to protect you from the virus than a mask.

- If you are sharing food, use utensils to serve the food and keep your personal spoon, fork, or chopsticks separate to avoid transmission through saliva.

Where can I find more information?

Information is updated on the Ministry of Health website.

You can also call your local doctor or Healthline on 0800 611 116.

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