



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

MEDIA RELEASE

18th March 2020

Papua New Guinea - Probable Case of COVID-19

Papua New Guinea, we have a probable imported case of Coronavirus or COVID-19 in Papua New Guinea.

The case is a 45 year old, male who arrived in Port Moresby on the 13th March, 2020. Through our checks at the airport, the case did not show any symptoms of cough, flu or fever. Exactly 24 hours after arriving in country he presented with a flu and slight fever and thus fitted the case definition of a COVID-19 person of Interest.

Immediately our Emergency Response Plan procedures were activated and he was isolated and placed under strict quarantine, with test results sent to the Institute of Medical Research for immediate testing.

The case travel history originated from Madrid, Barcelona, Istanbul, and entered our borders through Singapore. He then travelled from Port Moresby to Lae.

On the 14th of February, and in line with our Emergency Response Plan - contact tracing commenced, and close contacts were quarantined. None of the people who came into contact with the case at time of illness are showing symptoms of COVID-19. NDOH has initiated contact tracing on all passengers who may have come into contact with the case.

Importantly per the National Gazette No G169 of 16th March, the European Union was added to the list of countries on our restricted list. Those countries are Peoples Republic of China, Republic of Korea, Iran, The European Union, United Kingdom and the United States of America.

Hon Jelta Wong, MP
Minister for Health, HIV & Aids



Health advisory

All travellers should monitor their health closely for two weeks upon arrival in Papua New Guinea and seek medical attention promptly if they feel unwell, and also inform their doctor of their travel history. If they have a fever or respiratory symptoms (e.g. cough, shortness of breath), they should wear a mask and call the hotline.

The Health Minister Jelta Wong urges the public to take the necessary precautions to prevent the spread of the disease in the country. "I ask the people of Papua New Guinea and foreign guests of PNG to take care of your health, protect yourself and your family from COVID-19 by following these advisories:"

Do 5 things:

Practice basic personal hygiene. Wash your hands frequently with soap and water (after coughing or sneezing; when caring for the sick; before, during and after you prepare food; before eating; after toilet use; and whenever hands are dirty)

Cough or sneeze into your sleeve, or use a tissue. Dispose of the tissue immediately into a closed rubbish bin, and then wash your hands.

Practice social distancing – keep 1m distance away from others.

Stay at home if you are unwell.

Clean surfaces regularly with disinfectant – for example kitchen benches and work desks.

AVOID 3 things:

Avoid close contact with people who are unwell

Avoid mass gathering, crowded places or congregating in groups.

Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.

If you have cough, fever, and shortness of breath and have recently travelled or been in close contact with someone with COVID-19, Call the hotline at +675 71960813

USEFUL DEFINITIONS

Suspect Case:

1) *A patient with acute respiratory illness (fever and at least one sign/symptom of respiratory disease (eg. Cough, shortness of breath) AND with no other aetiology that fully explains the clinical presentation AND a history of travel or residence in a country/area or territory reporting local transmission of COVID-19 disease during the 14 days prior to symptom onset.*

OR

2) *A patient with any acute respiratory illness AND having been in contact with a confirmed or probably COVID-19 case in the last 14 days prior to onset of symptoms*

OR

- 3) *A patient with severe acute respiratory infection (fever and at least one sign/symptom of respiratory disease (e.g cough, shortness of breath) AND requiring hospitalization AND with no other aetiology that fully explains the clinical presentation*

Probable Case:

A suspect case for whom testing for COVID-19 is inconclusive

Confirmed Case:

A person with laboratory confirmation of COVID-19 infection, irrespective of clinical signs and symptoms

Contact Tracing

Contact tracing is defined as the identification and follow-up of persons who may have come into contact with a person infected with the COVID-19.

For media inquiries

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