

Indications for managing the issue of students and professors travelling to and from affected areas of China

On 31 December 2019 China informed the World Health Organisation (WHO) about a cluster of pneumonia cases of unknown aetiology, later identified as a new coronavirus, in the city of Wuhan, in the Chinese province of Hubei. The majority of cases occurred in the People's Republic of China. Few cases were reported in other countries, including Italy, especially in subjects coming from the affected areas during the past 14 days.

The most frequently reported route of transmission was close and prolonged interhuman contact. Additional studies are in progress.

Symptoms most widely observed include fever, dry cough, sore throat and breathing difficulty. The information currently available suggests that the virus can cause either a mild influenza-like form of the disease or manifest in a more severe form.

As stated by the European Centre for Disease Control, the estimated probability of observing cases caused by interhuman transmission of the disease in the European Union is very low to low, if cases are promptly identified and appropriately managed.

The estimated probability of observing cases in subjects of any nationality coming from the Chinese province of Hubei is high, while it is moderate for other Chinese provinces.

The Italian Ministry of Health has implemented, jointly with Regional Administrations, all procedures for prompt identification and appropriate management of the disease, with homogeneous procedures applied throughout the country.

Additional operative information can be obtained either through Regional Healthcare Authorities or by calling the **Ministry of Health's toll-free number: 1500**.

It is recommended to only use information published on the following websites: WHO (www.who.int), ECDC (www.ecdc.eu), Ministry of Health (www.salute.gov.it), Italian National Institute of Health (www.iss.it).

A permanent round table is in progress at the Ministry of Health, with the participation of Regional Administrations, to continuously monitor the situation.

In order to ensure consistent management in the framework of educational institutes of all types and levels, the following typical behavioural indications are provided for the various age groups.

Students attending university or equivalent courses

- A.** No specific measures are established for students who are not included in sections B and C below, except for those designed to prevent common respiratory infections:
 - a)** wash the hands;
 - b)** cover the airways when coughing or sneezing;
 - c)** throw away paper towels after use;
 - d)** pay particular attention to the hygiene of surfaces;
 - e)** avoid close contact with people presenting influenza-like symptoms.
- B.** Students who have returned from China during the past 2 weeks:
the above measures shall apply, along with those listed below;

- a) monitor the onset of any symptoms, such as cough, fever, breathing difficulty;
 - b) in case of manifestation of symptoms:
 - i. call 1500 or the regional reference centres;
 - ii. protect the airways with a mask;
 - iii. avoid close contact until the patient's condition has been defined by medical staff.
- C. Students who have been informed by healthcare authorities, or those who have come to know, in other ways, that they have travelled with a nCoV patient - with any type of transport - and/or that they have cohabited with a nCoV patient, within a period of 14 days:
- a) promptly call 1500 or the regional reference centres for surveillance measures, where they have not already been implemented by healthcare authorities.

Students and children attending educational services for babies, primary and secondary schools

Besides confirming the above indications provided for university students or students attending equivalent courses, for this age group it is suggested that adults belonging to school staff (both teachers and other staff) should particularly encourage the adoption of behaviours that might reduce the possibility of contamination via airway secretions, even through objects (toys, pencils, etc.).

Students travelling to affected areas

In the light of the global epidemiological situation concerning 2019-nCoV infection, in order to reduce the overall risk of acute respiratory infections, students of secondary schools and university students who are planning to travel to the affected areas **are clearly recommended to avoid such journeys**. In the event in which journeys to the affected areas have already commenced, the parties concerned shall comply with the following indications:

- I. avoid visiting live animal markets and markets selling fresh products of animal origin;
- II. avoid contact with people presenting respiratory symptoms;
- III. wash the hands often;
- IV. for any necessity, contact the Embassy or the Consulate;
- V. if any person develops respiratory symptoms (cough, sore throat, breathing difficulty) while visiting the areas at risk, he or she should immediately contact a doctor.

These indications shall also apply to lecturers, researchers and university staff. This information may be amended as the epidemiological situation changes.