

27 Jan 2020

Dear Doctor,

MOH Advisory for Healthcare Sector on the Wuhan Coronavirus (“Wuhan Virus”)

The Ministry of Health has confirmed imported cases of the Wuhan Coronavirus (“Wuhan virus”) infection in Singapore since 23 January 2020 and the Government has stepped up our safeguards accordingly. **As the Wuhan virus situation in China continues to evolve, MOH advises travellers to defer all non-essential travel to Mainland China.**

Travel to Mainland China: Leave of Absence for Healthcare Staff (Note: this section supersedes the advisory sent on 24 Jan 2020)

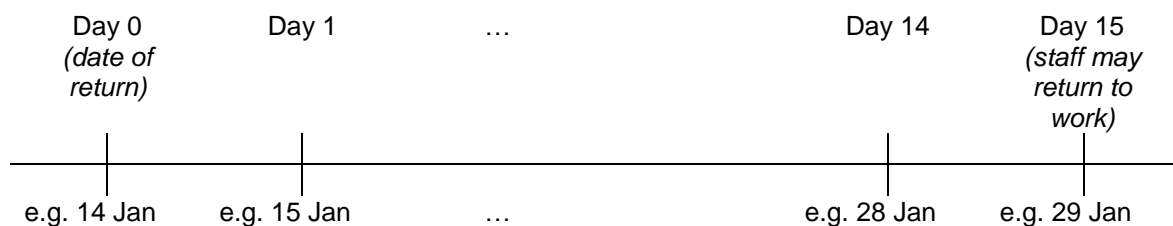
2. All staff working in the healthcare sector who have returned to Singapore from Mainland China should inform their institutions of their travel history and **will be required to take a Leave of Absence (LOA) for 14 days upon their return.** (Refer to Figure 1 for worked example.)

3. **This applies to all staff returning from Mainland China from today, as well as those who returned in the last 14 days. Employers should grant the LOA as paid leave, over and above the staff’s annual leave entitlement.**

4. In addition, **they should monitor their health closely, and see a doctor promptly if they are unwell and** inform their doctor of their travel history. If they have a fever or respiratory symptoms (e.g. cough, runny nose), they should wear a mask and call the clinic ahead of the visit.

5. Staff may return to work after they have cleared the 14 day LOA and they have not developed any symptoms (see Figure 1 below for a worked example).

Figure 1: Worked Example for Leave of Absence



6. If staff under LOA are living in dormitories or rented units, healthcare institutions/medical clinics are to work out arrangements to minimise close contact with other staff e.g. in separate rooms. If this is unavoidable, room-mates or flat-mates should also monitor their symptoms judiciously and avoid work if they are feeling unwell.

General Advice for Travel to Other Areas

7. Healthcare staff who intend to travel overseas to areas apart from mainland China, or have returned from overseas apart from mainland China, should declare their travel plans to their respective institutions promptly. There should also be processes in place at the institution level to track the health condition and well-being of these staff. All travellers should monitor their health closely for 2 weeks upon return to Singapore 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, runny nose), they should wear a mask and call the clinic ahead of the visit.

8. Travellers should adopt the following precautions at all times:
- Avoid contact with live animals including poultry and birds, and consumption of raw and undercooked meats;
 - Avoid crowded places and close contact with people who are unwell or showing symptoms of illness;
 - Observe good personal hygiene;
 - Practise frequent hand washing with soap (e.g. before handling food or eating, after going to toilet, or when hands are dirtied by respiratory secretions after coughing or sneezing);
 - Wear a mask if you have respiratory symptoms such as a cough or runny nose;
 - Cover your mouth with a tissue paper when coughing or sneezing, and dispose the soiled tissue paper in the rubbish bin immediately; and
 - Seek medical attention promptly if you are feeling unwell.

Response Measures at Healthcare Institutions

9. All healthcare institutions, including primary care providers, intermediate and long-term care (ILTC) institutions (e.g., nursing homes and eldercare centres), should put in place the following response measures:

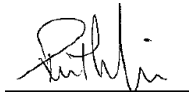
- (i) To continue to maintain strict infection control practices**
- (ii) To screen patients for fever and travel history based on the new case definition**
 - Healthcare institutions and primary care providers should ensure that there is a proper triage process and provide face masks for febrile patients
- (iii) Ensure that there is a robust staff sickness surveillance process to identify and manage unwell staff**
 - Remind staff on existing MOH health advisory, to remain vigilant and adopt general precautions

10. **The above measures are to take effect from Tuesday, 28 January 2020.**

For Clarifications

11. MOH would like to thank you for your support to manage the current situation.

12. If you have any queries or require further clarifications on this advisory, you may get in touch with AIC at 6632 1199 or email at gp@aic.sg.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ruth Lim', is positioned above a horizontal line.

DR RUTH LIM
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MINISTRY OF HEALTH