

# COVID-19

*Update 17th Feb 2020*

The situation continues to evolve.

Almost all cases of COVID19 are in China so, unless it is urgent, don't go to China for the moment - the persons in China have a lot going on, and probably don't need visitors right now anyway. There are no restrictions for Australians travelling to other countries. There is no risk in Australia.

Current estimates are that 80% persons experience only mild illness. Persons who are over 65 and with other medical complications are faring worst.

The recommendations for travellers are

## **1. Don't touch your face while travelling**

Virus can potentially live 9 days on surfaces under ideal conditions. If you touch the environment ( lift buttons, doorknobs, telephones, remote controls, benches etc) and then touch your face you can transfer viruses from then environment to your eyes, nose, and mouth and they go quickly down into your respiratory system where the virus can take hold.

## **2. Wash your hands frequently with soap and water**

Soap and water is the most effective means to remove the virus from your hands. Hand sanitising alcohol-based gel is not as effective for handwashing. Gel is antibacterial rather than antiviral. However, gel is better than nothing.

## **3. Masks are not helpful**

Masks are not helpful for healthy travellers except in very limited circumstances. Doctors wear masks, goggles and hazmat suits if they are serious about avoiding contamination from a patient with any infectious disease.

## **4. Sick persons - seek medical attention**

Sick persons should seek medical attention.

Well persons should ideally keep 1-2 metres from persons who are sick and coughing, but don't get paranoid. Sometimes this is not possible. Most coughing is not the coronavirus COVID19.