

29 JUL 2019

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Response to your request for official information

Thank you for your request for information under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) to the Ministry of Health (the Ministry) on 3 July 2019, for:

"I would be very interested in a copy of your manuals/procedures that are used by your organisation, when a phone call is made to your 0800 number, to report an illness that has occurred within 30 days of an arrival in to New Zealand from overseas.

Eg. The general process followed to identify other individuals at risk and stop spread of any infectious disease in New Zealand.

Can I please have a copy of any such document?"

Health advice cards provide advice to overseas travellers or returning New Zealanders on what to do if they get sick within a month of arriving in New Zealand. More information regarding these cards is available on the Ministry's website here: www.health.govt.nz/our-work/border-health/health-advice-cards-people-arriving-new-zealand.

The cards are available at the international airports in a range of displays, but if the public health risks indicate heightened border measures are needed we would arrange for the cards to be more actively distributed to travellers and the messaging on the cards may be more specific.

A phone call is made to Healthline on 0800 611 116 to report an illness that has occurred within 30 days of an arrival in to New Zealand from overseas. The purpose of people calling Healthline is to limit the possible spread of any infectious illnesses. The symptoms listed on the health advice cards are internationally recognised symptoms of concern and cover a range of possible infections.

When Healthline is contacted, they will consider the symptoms the person describes and advise whether they need to seek healthcare from a medical practitioner or emergency department. They may also provide advice, if appropriate, to the person about how to make sure they don't spread the disease to others while awaiting diagnosis and treatment. If the person is diagnosed with an infectious disease of public health concern, the local public health officers will talk to them about how they may have got infected and identify any contacts who may have also become infected. These contacts will be given advice about symptoms to watch out for and what they need to do to keep themselves and others safe. This information will be different, depending on the disease.

No manual or procedure document outlining the procedure following such a call exists, as the actions to be taken will depend on the exact circumstances. As such, your request is refused under section 18(e) of the Act as the information requested does not exist.

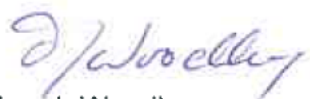
Examples of responses to such diseases, and to health risks at the border more generally, can be found here:

- Information about controlling communicable diseases: <https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/diseases-and-conditions/communicable-disease-control-manual/general-considerations-control-communicable-diseases-new-zealand>
- Information about the powers public health officers can use to manage infectious diseases: <https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/diseases-and-conditions/notifiable-diseases/summary-infectious-disease-management-under-health-act-1956>
- Information about managing cases and contacts of measles: <https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/diseases-and-conditions/communicable-disease-control-manual/measles#mancon>
- Information about the New Zealand response to Ebola virus disease: <https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/diseases-and-conditions/ebola-updates/ebola-information-health-professionals>
- Information about the New Zealand response to MERS Co-V: <https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/diseases-and-conditions/middle-east-respiratory-syndrome-coronavirus-mers-cov>
- Information about managing cases and contacts of a wide range of diseases can be found here: <https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/diseases-and-conditions/communicable-disease-control-manual>
- Information about managing border health risks: <https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/border-health/border-health-legislation-policy-and-planning>
- Information about responding to border emergencies: <https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/border-health/border-health-legislation-policy-and-planning/emergency-planning-and-border-responses>
- Information about the possible range of responses available to manage risks at the border: <https://www.health.govt.nz/publication/responding-public-health-threats-international-concern>

I trust that this information fulfils your request. Please note that this response, with your personal details removed, may be published on the Ministry of Health website (if applicable).

Under section 28(3) of the Act you have the right to ask the Ombudsman to review any decisions made under this request.

Yours sincerely



Deborah Woodley
Deputy Director-General
Population Health and Prevention