

SUBJECT: Latest guidance regarding novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV)
Date: February 6, 2020
Pages: 1 (with one attachment)
To: Primary Care Providers, Emergency Departments and Infection Control Practitioners
From: Dr. Nicola Mercer, Medical Officer of Health and CEO

Please ensure that patients phoning or visiting your office are screened for the novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV) based on their symptoms, travel history, and close contact with possible cases of 2019-nCoV.

Testing should be done if a patient has a fever and/or cough or difficulty breathing AND any of:

- Travel to **Hubei Province** (includes Wuhan), China in the 14 days before onset of illness; OR
- **Close contact** with a confirmed or probable case of novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV); OR
- **Close contact** with a person with acute respiratory illness who has been to **Hubei Province** (includes Wuhan) within 14 days prior to their illness onset.

Testing requires the ability to take appropriate airborne/droplet/contact precautions (including use of a fit-tested N95 mask) during specimen collection. **If a patient screens positive, please contact WDGPH** and we will help to determine the most appropriate setting for testing to occur.

For patients **without a travel history** in the past 14 days to Hubei Province and **without close contact** with a confirmed or probable case the risk that they have novel coronavirus is extremely low.

If your patient does not meet these case definitions please do not send them to the Emergency Department for testing. They can be seen in your office using routine infection control practices.

Updated resources:

The Government of Canada advises Canadians to avoid all travel to Hubei Province, China where the city of Wuhan is located, and avoid all non-essential travel to China. For more information, visit:

<https://travel.gc.ca/destinations/china>

Attached is a new patient-focussed Fact Sheet from the Ministry of Health. It is available in 17 languages at www.ontario.ca/coronavirus.

Health care providers or members of the public can speak with a Public Health Nurse about 2019-nCoV by calling WDG Public Health's Coronavirus Call Centre at 1-800-265-7293 ext. 7006, Monday - Friday 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.

All documents including prior Advisories are at wdgpublichealth.ca/hcpcoronavirus

For more information:

Name/Title: WDG Public Health, Control of Infectious Diseases

Contact: 1-800-265-7293 ext. 4752

www.wdgpublichealth.ca

Ministry of Health

2019 novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV)

On December 31, 2019, cases of undiagnosed viral pneumonia were reported by health authorities in Wuhan, China. The cause was confirmed as a new coronavirus, known as the 2019 novel coronavirus or 2019-nCoV, which has not previously been identified in humans.

What is the 2019 novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV)?

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses that can cause illnesses ranging from the common cold to more serious respiratory infections like bronchitis, pneumonia or severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS).

The 2019 novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV) is a respiratory infection that originated in Wuhan, China.

The first presumptive case of this virus in Ontario was identified on January 25, 2020.

To learn more about the 2019 novel coronavirus, visit [Ontario.ca/coronavirus](https://ontario.ca/coronavirus).

What are the symptoms?

Symptoms range from mild – like the flu and other common respiratory infections – to severe, and can include:

- fever
- cough
- difficulty breathing

Complications from the 2019 novel coronavirus can include serious conditions, like pneumonia or kidney failure, and in some cases, death.

If your symptoms feel worse than a common cold (for example, fever, cough, difficulty breathing) **and** you have travelled to an affected area¹ within 14 days of symptom onset, call Telehealth Ontario at 1-866-797-0000 or contact your local public health unit (health.gov.on.ca/en/common/system/services/phu/locations.aspx). Be sure to mention your symptoms and your travel history, including the countries you visited.

If you need immediate medical attention you should call 911 and mention your travel history and symptoms.

How does the virus spread?

Coronaviruses are spread mainly from person to person through close contact, for example, in a household, workplace or health care centre. The 2019 novel coronavirus has evidence of limited human-to-human transmission.

How can I protect myself against the 2019 novel coronavirus?

There is no vaccine available to protect against the 2019 novel coronavirus.

There are everyday actions that can help prevent the spread of germs that cause respiratory illnesses. Take these everyday steps to reduce exposure to the virus and protect your health:

- wash your hands often with soap and water
- sneeze and cough into your sleeve
- avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth
- avoid contact with people who are sick
- stay home if you are sick

¹ Please refer to Ontario.ca/coronavirus for current affected areas.

If you are travelling to an area known to have cases of coronavirus, be sure to avoid:

- high-risk areas such as farms, live animal markets and areas where animals may be slaughtered
- contact with animals (alive or dead), including pigs, chickens, ducks and wild birds
- surfaces with animal droppings or secretions on them

Can I receive treatment for the 2019 novel coronavirus?

There are no specific treatments for coronaviruses, and there is no vaccine that protects against coronaviruses. Most people with common human coronavirus illnesses will recover on their own.

If your symptoms feel worse than a common cold (for example, fever, cough, difficulty breathing) **and** you have travelled to an affected area² within 14 days of symptom onset, call Telehealth Ontario at 1-866-797-0000 or contact your local public health unit (health.gov.on.ca/en/common/system/services/phu/locations.aspx). Be sure to mention your symptoms and your travel history, including the countries you visited. You should also:

- drink plenty of fluids
- get rest and sleep as much as possible
- try a humidifier or a hot shower to help with a sore throat or cough

What if I feel sick while travelling or after I get back?

If you become sick when you are travelling or after you return, avoid contact with others and call Telehealth Ontario at 1-866-797-0000 or contact your local public health unit (health.gov.on.ca/en/common/system/services/phu/locations.aspx).

² Please refer to Ontario.ca/coronavirus for current affected areas.

Tell them:

- your symptoms
- where you have been travelling or living
- if you have had direct contact with animals (for example, visited a live animal market) or close contact with a sick person

If you feel sick during your flight to Canada or upon arrival, inform the flight attendant or a Canadian border services officer.

Learn about travel advisories related to the 2019 novel coronavirus at travel.gc.ca/travelling/advisories/pneumonia-china.

What should I do if I think I have the virus?

If you develop symptoms of the 2019 novel coronavirus, call Telehealth Ontario for medical advice at 1-866-797-0000 or contact your local public health unit (health.gov.on.ca/en/common/system/services/phu/locations.aspx).

Be sure to mention your symptoms and your travel history, including the countries you visited.

If you need immediate medical attention, call 911 and mention your travel history and symptoms.