

The Coronavirus Outbreak

Fast Facts & General Information



You have been provided this handout as an aide to support yourself, other employees and family members as a result of the questions and possible anxiety that has arisen from the recent novel coronavirus outbreak.

What is the novel coronavirus?

On 31 December 2019, the World Health Organization (WHO) was alerted to several cases of pneumonia in Wuhan City, Hubei Province of China. The virus did not match any other known virus. This raised concern because when a virus is new, we do not know how it affects people. One week later, on 7 January, Chinese authorities confirmed that they had identified a new virus. This new virus was temporarily named '2019-nCoV.' As of 2 February 2020, the WHO reports there are now more than 14,500 confirmed cases in 24 countries.¹

Symptoms are close to those of the common flu.

How are coronavirus infections diagnosed?

Coronavirus infections are diagnosed by a health care provider based on symptoms and laboratory tests. In some cases, travel history may be important.²

How is coronavirus treated?

According to Health Canada, currently, there are no specific treatments required for most people with coronavirus

infection, as most people with common coronavirus illness will recover on their own. Your health care provider may recommend steps you can take to relieve symptoms.

Consult your health care provider as soon as possible if you are concerned about your symptoms or have travelled recently to a region where the coronavirus outbreak is significantly widespread.

How do I reduce the risk of coronavirus infection?

To reduce your risk of coronavirus infection: clean your hands with soap and water or alcohol-based rub; cover your nose and mouth when coughing and sneezing with a tissue or flexed elbow; avoid close contact with anyone with cold or flu-like symptoms; thoroughly cook meat and eggs and have no unprotected contact with live wild animals. The Government of Canada is now recommending avoiding all non-essential travel to China and all travel of any kind to Hubei Province, China.

Need more information or assistance? All calls are completely confidential.

1-800-663-1142 | TTY: 1-888-384-1152 | International (Call Collect): 604-689-1717

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Is this an international public health emergency?

On 30 January 2020, the WHO determined that the 2019-nCoV outbreak is a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC). The risk of infection does remain low in Canada as there are four confirmed cases (three in Ontario and one in British Columbia) as of 2 February 2020.

How is Canada monitoring the situation?

The Public Health Agency of Canada is working with international partners, including the World Health Organization, to actively monitor the situation. Canada's Chief Public Health Officer is in close contact with provincial and territorial Chief Medical Officers of Health to ensure that Canada is prepared to rapidly identify and manage 2019-nCoV.³

Fast Facts

- WHO has determined that the coronavirus outbreak constitutes a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC).
- There are four confirmed cases in Canada as of 2 February 2020.
- Electronic respiratory screening has begun for travellers at all three major Canadian International airports (Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver) for respiratory symptoms. All travellers from China are receiving a document advising of symptoms and asked to report if symptoms occur in the next 14 days.
- Symptoms include: fever, cough, feeling unwell. Severe cases advance to include difficulty breathing.
- More than 14,500 confirmed cases have been reported worldwide as of 2 February 2020. The vast majority – more than 14,000 – is in China. No other single nation has reported more than 20 cases.

- One death – in the Philippines – has been reported outside of China.
- Usually, cases have mild symptoms. 1 in 4 cases has more severe symptoms.
- People of all ages can be infected by 2019-nCoV. Still, older individuals and those with pre-existing medical conditions such as asthma, diabetes and heart disease appear to be more vulnerable to the most severe symptoms.
- Source of illness remains unknown.

Where can I get more information on the novel coronavirus?

Here are some helpful links to gather more information.

Health Canada:

<https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada.html>

World Health Organization:

<https://www.who.int/>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:

<https://www.cdc.gov/>

References

1. World Health Organization. Novel Coronavirus (2019) [cited 2020 Feb 2]. Available from: <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>
2. Government of Canada. Coronavirus Infection (2020) [cited 2020 Jan 31]. Available from <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/coronavirus.html>
3. Government of Canada. Coronavirus Infection (2020) [cited 2020 Jan 31]. Available from <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection.html>

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