

COVID-19 Outbreak: Information for Health Professionals

CTS staff have compiled information from the Public Health Agency of Canada, World Health Organization, Canadian Medical Association, and other health organizations to provide the following summary.

What is the novel coronavirus?

The [World Health Organization \(WHO\)](#) describe coronaviruses as a large family of viruses that can cause illness ranging from the common cold to more severe diseases like Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS). The 2019 novel coronavirus, or "COVID-19", is a new strain that has not been identified in humans before. On March 11, 2020, [the World Health Organization \(WHO\) assessed COVID-19 as a pandemic](#). An updated Q&A is available on the WHO website: <https://www.who.int/news-room/q-a-detail/q-a-coronaviruses>

How Canada is monitoring the 2019 Novel Coronavirus infection

The Public Health Agency of Canada is working with provinces, territories and international partners, including the World Health Organization, to actively monitor the situation. Global efforts are focused on containment of the outbreak and the prevention of further spread.

Canada's Chief Public Health Officer of Canada is in close contact with provincial and territorial Chief Medical Officers of Health to ensure that any cases of COVID-19 occurring in Canada continue to be rapidly identified and managed in order to protect the health of Canadians.

Canada's National Microbiology Laboratory is performing diagnostic testing for the virus that causes COVID-19. The laboratory is working in close collaboration with provincial and territorial public health laboratories, which are now able to test for COVID-19.

A Cabinet Committee on the federal response to the coronavirus disease was created on March 4, 2020: <https://pm.gc.ca/en/news/news-releases/2020/03/04/prime-minister-creates-committee-covid-19>

Risk to Canadians

The risk for COVID-19 may be increased for certain settings such as:

- cruise ships
- crowded areas (such as public transit and shopping centres)
- gatherings (spiritual and cultural settings, theatres, sports arenas, festivals and conferences)

There is an increased risk of more severe outcomes for Canadians:

- aged 65 and over
- with compromised immune systems
- with underlying medical conditions

There are also increased health risks for Canadian travellers abroad. Because of these risks, the Government of Canada advises you to [avoid non-essential travel outside of Canada until further notice](#). This includes [cruise ships](#). It is important for all travellers to:

- [self-isolate](#) for 14 days after your return from travel outside of Canada

- some provinces and territories may have specific recommendations for certain groups such as health care workers
- monitor your health for fever, cough or difficulty breathing
- wash your hands often for 20 seconds and cover your mouth and nose with your arm when coughing or sneezing.

PHAC continues to reassess the public health risk, based on the best available evidence as the situation evolves.

Check the latest [travel health notices](#) before travelling.

Refer to PHAC's [frequently asked questions \(FAQ\)](#) for more information.

How is the virus transmitted?

The [WHO reports](#) that human-to-human transmission is occurring with a preliminary R0 estimate of 1.4-2.5. Current estimates of the incubation period of the virus range from 2–10 days, but more information about the mode of transmission is needed to confirm this. Experts are also still unclear whether transmission can occur from asymptomatic individuals or during the incubation period. The [WHO offers](#) standard recommendations to prevent the spread of coronavirus, including regular hand washing, covering the mouth and nose when coughing and sneezing, and thoroughly cooking meat and eggs. Where possible, WHO advises avoiding close contact with persons showing symptoms of respiratory illness, including coughing and sneezing. Refer to the WHO's [Daily COVID-19 situation report](#) for updates.

Symptoms and Treatment

<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/symptoms.html>

There is currently no vaccine against or specific treatment for COVID-19 infection. Treatment is supportive and should be tailored to the patient's condition.

The WHO has published guidance on the clinical management of severe acute respiratory infection when novel coronavirus infection is suspected:

[Clinical management of severe acute respiratory infection when novel coronavirus \(nCoV\) is suspected](#)

<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/technical-guidance/patient-management>

[https://www.who.int/publications-detail/considerations-for-quarantine-of-individuals-in-the-context-of-containment-for-coronavirus-disease-\(covid-19\)](https://www.who.int/publications-detail/considerations-for-quarantine-of-individuals-in-the-context-of-containment-for-coronavirus-disease-(covid-19))

https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/coronaviruse/20200307-responding-to-covid-19-communitytransmission-final.pdf?sfvrsn=ec5fa30a_5

Advice for healthcare professionals

Common signs of coronavirus infection include respiratory symptoms, fever, cough, shortness of breath and breathing difficulties. As with SARS and MERS, when dealing with suspected 2019-nCoV cases, health professionals should follow precautions and wear respiratory masks (N95 or higher) during intubation and when entering a negative pressure room.

The [Public Health Agency of Canada](#) provides information for healthcare professionals on the following topics:

- [What health professionals need to know](#)
- [Transmission](#)
- [Epidemiological information](#)
- [Detecting and reporting](#)
- [Infection prevention and control](#)
- [Treatment](#)
- [Guidance](#)
- Awareness Resources: <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/awareness-resources.html>

PHAC Infection Prevention and Control guidelines:

- [Infection prevention and control for coronavirus disease \(COVID-19\): Interim guidance for acute healthcare settings](#)
- [Infection Prevention and Control Guidance for Middle East Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus \(MERS-CoV\) in Acute Care Settings](#)
- [Routine Practices and Additional Precautions for Preventing the Transmission of Infection in Healthcare Settings](#)

Provincial Information for healthcare providers:

British Columbia: <http://www.bccdc.ca/health-professionals/clinical-resources/covid-19-care>

Alberta: <https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/topics/Page16947.aspx>

Saskatchewan: <https://www.saskatchewan.ca/government/health-care-administration-and-provider-resources/treatment-procedures-and-guidelines/emerging-public-health-issues/2019-novel-coronavirus/information-for-health-care-providers>

Manitoba: <https://sharedhealthmb.ca/covid19/providers/>

Ontario: http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/publichealth/coronavirus/2019_guidance.aspx

Quebec: <https://www.msss.gouv.qc.ca/professionnels/covid-19/>

New Brunswick:

https://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/departments/ocmoh/cdc/content/respiratory_diseases/coronavirus/HealthandAlliedHealthProfessionals.html

Nova Scotia: <http://www.cdha.nshealth.ca/coronavirus>

Prince Edward Island: <https://www.princeedwardisland.ca/en/publication/covid-19-novel-coronavirus-guideline>

Newfoundland & Labrador: <https://www.gov.nl.ca/covid-19/> (scroll down the page for HCP information)

Nunavut: <https://gov.nu.ca/health/news/covid-19-department-health-services-update>

N.W.T.: <https://www.hss.gov.nt.ca/en/services/coronavirus-disease-covid-19>

Yukon: <https://yukon.ca/en/information-about-novel-coronavirus-yukoners>

WHO Technical Guidance: <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/technical-guidance>

WHO Interim Guidance: Responding to community spread of COVID-19
https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/coronaviruse/20200307-responding-to-covid-19-communitytransmission-final.pdf?sfvrsn=ec5fa30a_5

WHO - When and How to Wear a Mask <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public/when-and-how-to-use-masks>

CDC Interim Infection Prevention and Control Recommendations for Patients with Confirmed 2019 Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV) or Patients Under Investigation for 2019-nCoV in Healthcare Settings: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/hcp/infection-control.html>

WHO Infection Prevention Infographic: https://www.who.int/images/default-source/health-topics/coronavirus/1overall.png?sfvrsn=4f38434f_4

WHO Myth Busters: <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public/myth-busters>

WHO Q&A for the public <https://www.who.int/news-room/q-a-detail/q-a-coronaviruses>



Province of Ontario Guidance for Primary Care Providers:
<https://www.ontariofamilyphysicians.ca/tools-resources/timely-trending/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov>

Association of Medical Microbiology and Infectious Disease Canada (AMMI Canada):
Information on the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of various infectious diseases:
<https://www.ammi.ca/>

Canadian Society of Allergy and Clinical Immunology Guidance: [COVID-19: Pandemic Contingency Planning for the Allergy and Immunology Clinic](#)

Free Online CME:

- 1) WHO Online Course:** Emerging respiratory viruses, including nCoV: methods for detection, prevention, response and control <https://openwho.org/courses/introduction-to-ncov>
- 2) WHO Online Course:** Operational Planning Guidelines and COVID-19 Partners Platform to support country preparedness and response <https://openwho.org/channels/covid-19>
- 3) MDBriefCase:** [A Canadian Healthcare Provider's Guide To The Novel Coronavirus \(2019-NCov\)](#)

Repositories:

BMJ <https://www.bmj.com/coronavirus>

Lancet Respiratory Medicine <https://www.thelancet.com/coronavirus>

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NEJM <https://www.nejm.org/coronavirus>

JAMA <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jama/pages/coronavirus-alert>

Further information:

- [Public Health Agency of Canada](#)
- [Infection Prevention and Control Canada](#)
- [Canadian Medical Association](#) – Update on coronavirus
- [Canadian Society for Respiratory Therapists: What RTS should know](#)
- [World Health Organization technical guidance on Coronavirus](#)
- [US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention 2019 Novel Coronavirus Summary](#)
- [John Hopkins University – Interactive global tracking map 2019nCoV](#)
- [WHO Situation Dashboard](#)
- [NICE COVID-19 rapid guideline: critical care](#)
- [British Thoracic Society – Information for the respiratory community](#)

Government of Canada Travel advice:

- <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/latest-travel-health-advice.html>

Government of Canada Statements & Updates

- https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection.html?&utm_campaign=gc-hc-sc-coronavirusoutbreak-1920-0165-9221800776&utm_medium=search&utm_source=google-ads-96470960074&utm_content=text-en-425457848789&utm_term=corona%20virus#a5

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