



FAX about ...



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Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV) Update #1

Durham Region Health Department (DRHD) is monitoring the **2019-nCoV** outbreak as it continues to evolve.

Novel (new) coronavirus (2019-nCoV), is a strain of coronavirus that has not been previously identified in humans. There is now evidence of **human to human transmission** of this virus.

Currently there are **no cases in Durham Region or Canada** and therefore the risk is very low.

Signs and symptoms of 2019-nCoV include **fever and acute respiratory illness or pneumonia**. The people most at risk for 2019-nCoV are those with **recent travel** to the city of **Wuhan, China**. 2019-nCoV has been added to the list of **Diseases of Public Health Significance** and suspect and confirmed cases are **reportable as soon as possible** to DRHD.

Patients suspected of having 2019-nCoV should be placed in an **airborne infection isolation room** when possible or wear a **surgical mask** when outside of an airborne infection isolation room. Health care workers are advised to wear gloves, gowns, fit-tested, seal-checked N95 respirators and eye protection when entering the same room as the patient or when transporting or caring for the patient.

The attached memo from the Ministry of Health (Ministry) provides further information for health care workers about the use of **airborne precautions** for 2019-nCoV. The detailed current **case definitions** to be used are found in the second attachment.

Should you receive calls from your patients or have a patient visiting your health care facility who meets any of the case definitions, please call DRHD for further assessment and direction at 905-668-7711 ext 2996 or after hours 905-576-9991. When you call please identify that you are calling about novel coronavirus. Testing for 2019-nCoV requires prior approval from the [Public Health Ontario Laboratory](#). DRHD will assist with this process.

The Ministry is working diligently to produce supporting documents as quickly as possible. DRHD will continue to monitor the situation and **provide information as it becomes available**. Information will also be posted on durham.ca/HCP.

Health care provider resources now available to order online durham.ca/HCP.

Durham Region Health Department: 905-668-7711, 1-800-841-2729

January 24, 2020

If you prefer to receive this information in an electronic format please submit your request to healthresources@durham.ca

If you require this information in an accessible format, contact 1-800-841-2729.

Ministry of Health

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January 23, 2020

Dear Health System Partners,

I am writing to continue sharing information about the novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV). This outbreak of 2019-nCoV continues to evolve, and there have been some significant developments that I want to bring to your attention.

1. Case Counts:

Firstly, the case counts in China (Wuhan, Beijing, Shanghai plus several other provinces) and the surrounding region (Thailand, Japan, South Korea, Hong Kong, Macau) have dramatically increased, from 44 on January 17th, 2020, to more than 500 reported today. The United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention announced earlier this week (January 21) the first confirmed case of the novel coronavirus in a patient in Seattle who had recently travelled to Wuhan. Among the cases reported to-date, we continue to see a spectrum of illness, with the majority of cases reported as having mild illness. We have seen some individuals listed as in severe or critical condition and, sadly, there have been 17 deaths, all in Hubei Province (Wuhan).

2. Infections in Health Workers:

We have learned that several health workers in China have contracted 2019-nCoV. To date, we lack key information needed to interpret this report. For example, we do not know when these health workers first became ill or the Infection Prevention and Control/ Occupational Health and Safety precautions and practices they were using at the time of infection.

3. Human-to-human transmission:

There is now evidence of human-to-human transmission of this virus, and the World Health Organization has said that there may now be sustained human-to-human transmission. More information and analysis are needed on this new virus to understand the full extent of the human-to-human transmission and other important details.

4. Reportable to Public Health:

Yesterday, the Minister of Health announced an update to the *Health Protection and Promotion Act* (HPPA) that adds “diseases caused by novel coronaviruses, including SARS and MERS” to the list of Diseases of Public Health Significance under the Designation of Diseases regulation (O. Reg. 135/18) in Ontario. As of yesterday, novel coronaviruses, including Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) and Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS-CoV) and 2019-nCoV, must be reported to local public health officials by those who have a Duty to Report under the HPPA (including physicians, hospitals, laboratories). This new Disease of Public Health Significance has also been designated as communicable, providing Medical Officers of Health with powers under the HPPA to ensure appropriate case and contact management.

With yesterday's addition of the novel Coronavirus to the regulations, please see the attached case definitions for 2019-nCoV.

5. Infection Prevention and Control/ Occupational Health and Safety:

At this time, consistent with the guidance in place for MERS-CoV, the ministry is recommending the following for acute care settings. Please note that the ministry is reviewing guidance for other settings and will provide further updates in the coming days:

Routine Practices and Additional Precautions (Contact, Droplet, Airborne) by health care workers at risk of exposure to a confirmed case, presumptive confirmed case, probable case or person under investigation (or PUI) and/or the patient's environment. These precautions include:

- hand hygiene
- use of airborne infection isolation rooms when possible
- masking the patient with a surgical mask when outside of an airborne infection isolation room
- use of gloves, gowns, fit-tested, seal-checked N95 respirators and eye protection by health care workers when entering the same room as the patient or when transporting or caring for the patient

For more information on Routine Practices and Additional Precautions, health care workers should refer to (PIDAC's) [Routine Practices and Additional Precautions in All Health Care Settings](#) and [Annex B: Prevention of Transmission of Acute Respiratory Infection in all Health Care Settings](#).

Note: The use of Airborne Precautions is a higher level of precaution than is being recommended by the Public Health Agency of Canada or the World Health Organization (WHO), or that is normally recommended for coronaviruses. The ministry is recommending at this time that health care workers apply Airborne Precautions based on the application of the precautionary principle to this novel virus for which little information about transmission and clinical severity is available.

I want to reiterate that even as this outbreak has grown, the risk to Ontarians remains low. It would not be unexpected for us to see a case in Ontario, but I am confident that we have the processes, skilled clinicians and dedicated health workers we need to identify and manage a case safely and effectively.

As new information becomes available, I will continue to share it with you. We will be ready to launch a regular communications cycle with system partners as the situation evolves and will keep you apprised of these details. In the meantime, health sector partners are encouraged to contact the Health System Emergency Management Branch at 1-866-212-2272 (24/7) or during business hours at eocooperations.moh@ontario.ca if they have any questions or concerns.

Yours truly,

Original signed by

Barbara Yaffe, MD, MHSc, FRCPC
Associate Chief Medical Officer of Health

Attachments

c: Peter Donnelly, President and Chief Executive Officer, Public Health Ontario