

Coronavirus 2019

General Q&A

Q: What is coronavirus?

A: Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses. They can cause diseases ranging from the common cold to more severe diseases such as Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) and Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS-CoV). Some cause illness in people, while others circulate among animals. Some coronaviruses transmit easily from person to person while others do not.

Q: What is different about the 2019-Novel Coronavirus?

A: Novel simply means that this is a new virus that has not been previously identified. As with new viruses, further details will be available as we learn more.

Q: Is there a vaccine that protects against coronaviruses?

A: Currently, there is no approved vaccine that protects against coronaviruses in humans.

Q: Can the infection spread easily?

A: While human-to-human transmission is possible with close contact, there is limited evidence that this virus transmits easily between people.

Q: How do I protect myself against coronavirus?

A: Currently, there is no approved vaccine that protects against coronaviruses in humans.

As a respiratory illness, the best method to protect yourself against coronavirus is to practice everyday preventive actions, including:

- Practice proper cough and sneezing etiquette (into the bend of your elbow);
- Wash your hands often with soap and water; if soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer;
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands;
- Maintain safe food practices; and

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick

Q: What are the symptoms? How would I know if I have this illness?

A: It depends on the specific virus, but common signs include respiratory symptoms: fever, cough, shortness of breath, and breathing difficulties. In more severe cases, infection can cause pneumonia, severe acute respiratory syndrome, kidney failure and even death. Older people or those with chronic illnesses may be at higher risk for a more severe form of the disease.

Q: How is coronavirus treated?

A: Like most respiratory illnesses, most people with common coronavirus illness will recover on their own. There is no specific treatment for disease caused by a novel coronavirus. However, many of the symptoms can and should be treated. If symptoms feel worse than a standard cold, see a health care provider or call Healthline at 811.

Q: I have a respiratory illness. Should I isolate myself?

A: If you have recently traveled from central China and have developed a cough or fever, contact Healthline 811 to determine the best course of action. Most symptoms can be treated at home. Treat the symptoms and do not return to school or work until you are better. You should seek medical attention if symptoms do not improve or become worse. Tell your health care provider if you have returned from China in the past 14 days.

Q: I have heard that a person may be carrying coronavirus for up to 14 days without showing symptoms. Should people returning from China self-isolate for 14 days?

A: If an individual has coronavirus, they are at the greatest risk to others when they have symptoms -- particularly a cough -- based on best information on how this respiratory illness is transmitted. If you have no symptoms, the risk of transmitting the virus to others is low. The Public Health Agency of Canada still advises that when no symptoms are present, individuals may go to school or work.

Q: Our workplace/school has people who have travelled to China. Should they stay home until they know they do not have coronavirus?

A: No, at this time, only people who have traveled from central China and have developed a cough or fever should limit contact with other people and call HealthLine (811) to determine the best course of action. If the person does not have symptoms of a cough or fever, they can go to work or to school.

Q: When should I seek medical attention?

A: As with any respiratory illness, most symptoms can be treated at home. Treat the symptoms and do not return to school or work until you are better. Seek medical attention if symptoms do not improve or become worse.

Canadians should always consult with their health care providers about their travel if they become ill after returning to Canada. Tell your health care provider about your symptoms, where you have been travelling or living and whether you have had close contact with a sick person or had another high-risk exposure such as direct contact with animals or their droppings or secretions (e.g., visiting a live animal market or farm).

Q: Should I wear a surgical mask to protect myself from coronavirus?

A: There is no evidence that surgical masks protect persons who are not sick. The World Health Organization does not recommend the use of any masks if you do not have a travel history and respiratory symptoms. If you have respiratory symptoms such as cough or difficulty breathing and a relevant travel history you should wear a surgical/procedure mask when seeking medical care at a health facility. If you are going to a healthcare facility for treatment of your respiratory illness and do not have a mask, ask for one at the admission desk and one will be provided to you.

Q: Should I wear masks to protect myself as a caregiver in the home?

A: If HealthLine, public health officials or your healthcare provider have advised you to self-isolate, you may be cared for at home. If you are providing care to someone with suspected or confirmed coronavirus at home, it's recommended to keep distant from

an affected individual as much as possible. Hand hygiene should be performed frequently, preferably using soap and water or an alcohol-based hand rub. Wear a surgical mask when in the same room with the affected individual and dispose of the mask immediately after use. Hand hygiene should also be performed following removal of the mask. Eye protection is also recommended.

Q: What happens if there is a confirmed case of the virus in Saskatchewan?

A: Although public health officials anticipate that there will be additional cases of coronavirus in Canada, the role of public health is to limit the spread through education and surveillance. **The risk of spread in Canada is low.** Coronavirus is a respiratory illness, and there are best practices for individuals and health care providers to protect against the spread of respiratory illnesses.

Q: How do we stop this from coming to Canada?

A: There are no direct flights from Wuhan to Canada so travelers coming indirectly from Wuhan are expected to enter Canada through the Vancouver, Toronto or Montreal international airports. Public Health Agency of Canada has measures in place at these airports to help identify any travelers returning to Canada who may be ill and to raise awareness among travelers about what they should do if they become sick.

Q: Why is the overall risk to Canadians low?

A: Though it is likely that there may be limited human-to-human spread of the coronavirus between close contacts (e.g. family members or caregivers of people with the infection), there has been no indication at this time that this coronavirus is easily spread beyond those close contacts.

The Public Health Agency of Canada is also sharing information and working with federal, provincial and territorial partners and public health authorities to maintain Canada's preparedness to reduce the potential risk of introduction and spread of this virus in Canada.

Q. Should I be concerned with packages or goods arriving from China?

A: There is no concern with goods arriving from Wuhan or elsewhere in China.

Q. Where can I find more information?

A: Saskatchewan has set up a dedicated page to keep members of the public informed. Visit www.saskatchewan.ca/coronavirus – more information will be added as it becomes available.