

2019 Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV)

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What are coronaviruses?

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses. Some coronaviruses can cause illness in people and others can cause illness in animals. Rarely, animal coronaviruses can infect people, and more rarely, these can then spread from person to person through close contact.

What is the 2019 Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV)?

Novel coronaviruses are new strains of coronaviruses that have not been previously identified in humans. A novel coronavirus has emerged in Wuhan, China which is called the 2019 Novel Coronavirus or 2019-nCoV.

Signs and Symptoms

In general, human coronaviruses commonly cause mild but occasionally more severe respiratory infections. It is estimated that they cause about 15% of common colds. Coronaviruses can also cause more severe illness, such as severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) and Middle East respiratory syndrome (MERS)

Some of the symptoms of 2019-nCoV include:

- fever
- cough
- difficulty breathing

Right now, scientists are working to understand the full spectrum of illness associated with 2019-nCoV and indications of who might get more severe illness.

Diagnosis and Testing

In general, coronavirus infections are diagnosed by a healthcare provider based on signs, symptoms, and laboratory tests. Travel history is also important. There is a specific test for 2019-nCoV to confirm the infection if it is suspected.

Treatment

Currently, there is no specific antiviral treatment for 2019-nCoV. However, many of the symptoms can be treated and treatment is based on the patient's clinical condition.

Prevention

There is currently no vaccine to prevent 2019-nCoV. The best way to prevent infection is to avoid being exposed to this virus. Prevention measures include:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with people who are ill.
- Stay home when you are ill.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then immediately throw the tissue in the garbage and clean your hands.
- If you don't have a tissue, sneeze or cough into your sleeve or arm.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.
- Prior to travelling, check the Public Health Agency of Canada – Travel Advice and Advisories website (<https://travel.gc.ca/travelling/advisories>) for up-to-date travel information.

Advice if you, or someone you know, has recently returned from mainland China

Travelers who have recently been in the Province of Hubei, China (including Wuhan City) are asked to limit contact with others for a total of 14 days from the date that you left Hubei. This means self-isolate and stay at home. Contact Toronto Public Health at 416-338-7600.

Travelers to mainland China other than Hubei Province are asked to watch for signs and symptoms which may develop up to 14 days after an exposure. **If you develop symptoms** of 2019-nCoV, avoid contact with others (e.g., stay home from school or work), follow-up with a healthcare provider and contact Toronto Public Health at 416-338-7600. Tell the healthcare provider about your travel history **before** going to a medical office or an emergency department. This will allow the healthcare provider to prepare for your visit and protect other patients.

Self-Care

Persons diagnosed with 2019-nCoV or those who are suspected of having 2019-nCoV should stay home. Specifically, **DO NOT** attend child care, school or work; avoid group activities, public places, taking public transit; and refrain from having visitors.

Public Health's Role

All suspected and confirmed cases of 2019-nCoV are reportable to local health authorities under the Health Protection and Promotion Act. Toronto Public Health is closely monitoring this outbreak, and is working closely with provincial and federal public health colleagues. Toronto Public Health has response protocols in place based on prior novel coronavirus outbreaks and is actively working on outbreak preparedness, and will follow-up on all suspect or confirmed cases and their contacts. The City of Toronto continues to actively monitor the situation in collaboration with provincial and national health agencies, as well as local partners including hospitals, local airports, and community agencies.

Transmission/Spread

Coronaviruses are normally spread through large respiratory droplets (e.g., coughing, sneezing). They are not typically spread by the airborne route (i.e., small droplets that linger in the air), although, with any new virus this needs to be confirmed. Many of the initial cases in the outbreak caused by 2019-nCoV in Wuhan, China had some link to a market, suggesting animal-to-person spread. However, there is evidence of person-to-person spread. It's important to note that how easily a virus spreads person-to-person can vary. Some viruses are highly contagious, while other viruses are less so. It is not clear yet how easily 2019-nCoV spreads from person-to-person.

More information

For more information, contact Toronto Health Connection: 416-338-7600.

Ontario Ministry of Health: <https://www.ontario.ca/page/2019-novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov>

References

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