



COVID-19 (Novel Coronavirus)

What is COVID-19 (Novel Coronavirus)?

COVID-19 (novel coronavirus) is a new virus that causes respiratory illness in people and can spread from person-to-person. This virus was first identified during an investigation into an outbreak in Wuhan, China.

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses that can cause illnesses ranging from the common cold to more serious respiratory infections like bronchitis, pneumonia or severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS).

How is it spread?

Much is unknown about how COVID-19 spreads. Current knowledge is largely based on what is known about similar coronaviruses. Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses that are common in many different species of animals including camels, cattle, cats and bats. Rarely, animal coronaviruses can infect people and then spread between people such as with SARS and now with COVID-19.

Most often, spread from person-to-person happens among close contacts (about 6 feet). Person-to-person spread is thought to occur mainly via respiratory droplets made when an infected person coughs or sneezes, similar to how influenza and other respiratory pathogens spread.

Your risk of severe diseases may be higher if you have a weakened immune system. This may be the case for:

- Older people
- People with chronic diseases (for example: diabetes, high blood pressure, heart, liver or chronic lung disease).

Have there been cases of COVID-19 in Canada?

Yes. The first infection with COVID-19 in Canada was reported on January 25, 2020.

What symptoms should I watch for?

Symptoms range from mild like flu and other common respiratory infections to severe illness, and can include:

- Fever
- Cough
- Difficulty breathing

Complications can include serious conditions like pneumonia or kidney failure, and in some cases, death.

What is the treatment for Coronavirus?

There are no specific treatments for coronavirus, and there is no vaccine that protects against coronavirus. Most people with common human coronavirus illnesses will recover on their own.

How can I avoid getting sick from respiratory illnesses including COVID-19?

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick
- Wash your hands often with soap and water or use alcohol-based hand sanitizers
- Sneeze and cough into your sleeve
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth
- Stay home if you are sick
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces

What if I have recently traveled?

If you have travelled to Hubei province in the last 14 days, limit your contact with others for a total of 14 days from the date that you left Hubei. This means self-isolate and **stay at home**.

All travellers from mainland China are advised to monitor themselves for [symptoms](#).

- If you become sick after you return, avoid contact with others and call:
 - the local public health unit at 705-721-7520 (1-877-721-7520), Monday to Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.; OR
 - Telehealth at 1-866-797-0000 (24/7); OR
 - call your healthcare provider for further advice.
 - If you are in medical distress and require immediate medical attention, call 911.