

HALTON REGION HEALTH DEPARTMENT • Office of the Medical Officer of Health

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TO: Halton Physicians, Nurse Practitioners, Emergency Departments

FROM: Dr. Joanna Oda, Associate Medical Officer of Health

DATE: January 23, 2020

RE: Updated Information re: Novel Coronavirus in Wuhan, China

QUICK FACTS

- Novel Coronavirus is now a disease reportable under Ontario's public health legislation.
- Physicians, hospitals and other facilities should report persons meeting the criteria below to Halton Public Health by calling 311:
 - A person with fever and acute respiratory illness, or pneumonia AND any of the following:
 - Travel to Wuhan, China in the 14 days before onset of illness OR
 - Close contact with a confirmed or probable case of 2019-nCoV OR
 - Close contact with a person with acute respiratory illness who has been to Wuhan, China within 14 days prior to their illness onset.
- Hospitals should also notify their Infection Prevention and Control departments.
- Cases have been reported in Thailand, Japan, Korea and the US, all with a travel history to Wuhan. There have been no confirmed cases in Canada.
- Human-to-human transmission has occurred, but it is unknown if 2019-nCoV is easily transmitted.
- Cases in healthcare workers have been reported, but it is unknown when they became ill or the Infection Prevention and Control measures in place at time of infection.
- The number of travellers to and from China is expected to significantly increase, with Chinese New Year beginning on January 25, 2020.
- The situation continues to evolve rapidly. Halton Public Health will provide updates as more information becomes available. The latest information is available through the [World Health Organization](#) and the [Public Health Agency of Canada](#).

KEY MESSAGES FOR HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS

- Take a travel history among patients presenting with an acute respiratory illness.
- Ensure clinic and hospital infection prevention and control practices are consistent with PIDAC's [Routine Practices and Additional Precautions for All Health Care Settings](#). Ensure adequate supplies of necessary equipment including alcohol-based hand sanitizer and masks.
- In addition to routine practices, the Ministry of Health recommends individuals who meet the criteria be placed on **Droplet, Contact and Airborne Precautions**. The Ministry notes the use of Airborne Precautions is different than what is being recommended by the Public Health Agency of Canada and the World Health Organization. The Ministry's recommendation is based on the precautionary principle and may change as more information becomes available.

Please report all suspected/confirmed cases of [Diseases of Public Health Significance](#) (including positive TB skin test results) to Public Health immediately by calling 311, 905-825-6000 or toll free at 1-866-442-5866.

PLEASE POST IN EMERGENCY DEPARTMENTS AND PHYSICIAN LOUNGES

IF YOU CAN'T ACCESS HYPERLINKS, PLEASE SIGN UP FOR ELECTRONIC UPDATES BY EMAILING DOCTORS@HALTON.CA

- To reduce the spread of **any** respiratory illness, [PIDAC](#) recommends all patients with fever and cough, regardless of travel history, be asked to wash their hands, wear a mask and wait in a separate area.
- Public Health Ontario Laboratory's testing guidance for 2019-nCoV is available [online](#).

KEY MESSAGES FOR PATIENTS

- The risk of infection with the novel coronavirus in Ontario remains low.
- To prevent infection, usual health precautions are recommended:
 - Wash hands often
 - Practice cough and sneeze etiquette
 - Avoid contact with others when sick
- If you become sick after travelling, see a health care professional and tell them your travel history.
- Travellers should consult the [Travel Canada website](#) for the latest health advice prior to departure.