

Coronavirus (COVID-19)

COVID-19 is the name for the newly identified coronavirus; it is also known as 2019-nCov. Respiratory infections caused by COVID-19 first appeared in Wuhan City, China during the month of December 2019. The outbreak was declared a Public Health Emergency of International Concern by the WHO on January 30, 2020.

Although COVID-19 originated from Wuhan, China, it has spread to a number of countries including to Canada. There have been a small number of cases in British Columbia which are being closely managed. The risk to British Columbians remains low.

How is coronavirus transmitted?

Coronavirus is spread from an infected person through:

- Droplets spread when a person coughs or sneezes
- Close personal contact such as touching or shaking hands
- Touching an object or surface with the virus on it, then touching your mouth, nose, or eyes before washing your hands

What are the symptoms?

Common symptoms for COVID-19 are:

- Fever
- Cough
- Difficulty breathing

At this time, the available information suggests the incubation period is up to 14 days. The incubation period is the time from when a person is first exposed until symptoms appear.

What should I do if I think I have COVID-19?

If you have symptoms and have recently visited China or have been exposed to someone who has COVID-19, avoid contact with others, except to see a health care provider as soon as possible.

If you are going to visit your health care provider, call them ahead of time so they can arrange for you to be assessed safely. Wear a mask in order to protect others. If you are unsure about what to do or have concerns or questions, contact HealthLinkBC (**8-1-1**) at any time or speak with your health care provider.

When seeing a health care provider, please tell them:

- Your symptoms
- Where you have been travelling or living
- If you had direct contact with animals (for example, if you visited a live animal market)

- If you had close contact with a sick person, especially if they had a fever, cough or difficulty breathing

What should I do if I have been travelling?

If you are returning from Hubei Province or have been in close contact with someone who has been diagnosed with COVID-19, consider staying home and limit contact with others for a total of 14 days from your return. Monitor yourself daily for symptoms like fever or cough for these 14 days. If you develop symptoms, call HealthLinkBC (8-1-1) at any time or speak with your health care provider to discuss any need for testing and follow up.

For more information see:

- [Government of Canada: Novel coronavirus: Information sheet - Travellers returning from Hubei Province, China](#)

If you are returning from other parts of China (outside Hubei Province), monitor yourself daily for symptoms like fever or cough for a total of 14 days from your return. If you develop symptoms, consider staying home, limit contact with others and call HealthLinkBC (8-1-1) at any time or speak with your health care provider to discuss any need for testing and follow up.

For more information see:

- [Government of Canada: Novel coronavirus: Information sheet - Travellers returning from mainland China \(excluding Hubei Province\)](#)

How can I prevent getting infected?

The most important thing you can do to prevent infection is to wash your hands regularly and avoid touching your face. To help reduce your risk of infection:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Using soap and water is the single most effective way of reducing the spread of infection
- If a sink is not available, alcohol based hand rubs (ABHR) can be used to clean your hands as long as they are not visibly soiled. If they are visibly soiled, use a wipe and then ABHR to effectively clean them
- Do not touch your face, eyes, nose or mouth with unwashed hands
- Cover your mouth and nose with a disposable tissue or the crease of your elbow when you sneeze or cough
- Regularly clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces
- Do not share food, drinks, utensils, etc

Should I wear a mask?

- If you are sick, wearing a mask helps prevent you from passing on illnesses to other people
- If you are not sick, it is not known how effective wearing a mask in the community is

Learn more about how to decrease your risk:

- [HealthLinkBC File #85 Hand Washing: Help Stop the Spread of Germs](#)

Learn more about how to stay healthy on your trip:

- [Travel Health](#)

Is there a vaccine for a COVID-19?

When a disease is new, there is no vaccine until one is developed. It can take many years to develop a new vaccine.

Is there a treatment for COVID-19?

There is no specific treatment for disease caused by COVID-19. Many of the symptoms can be managed with home treatment such as drinking plenty of fluids, rest and using a humidifier or hot shower to ease a cough or sore throat. Most people recover from coronaviruses on their own. For people with more serious illness supportive care in or out of hospital may be needed.

For more information on what you can do if you have symptoms, see:

- [Colds](#)
- [Fever or Chills, Age 12 and Older](#)
- [Fever or Chills, Age 11 & Younger](#)

How is COVID-19 diagnosed?

The BCCDC Public Health Laboratory (PHL) has developed laboratory guidance for COVID-19 diagnostic testing. If your health care provider thinks you may have the new coronavirus, they will arrange for testing.

Common Questions about novel coronavirus

For more answers to some of the most common questions about coronavirus see:

- [BCCDC: Novel coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)
- [Government of Canada: Novel Coronavirus infection: Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQ\)](#)
- [Vancouver Coastal Health Authority: Information on Coronavirus Disease \(COVID-19\)](#)
- [World Health Organization: Q&A on coronaviruses](#)

Useful Websites

BC Centre for Disease Control

BCCDC provides health promotion and prevention services, and diagnostic and treatment services to reduce communicable and chronic disease, preventable injury and environmental health risks. BCCDC also provides analytical and policy support to government and health authorities.

- General Public: [Novel coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)
- Health Professionals: [Novel coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)
- News and Updates: [Latest case counts on novel coronavirus](#)

The Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC)

The Public Health Agency of Canada promotes health, prevents and controls chronic diseases and injuries, and infectious diseases. The PHAC responds to public health emergencies. For more information about COVID-19, including travel advisories, see:

- [Government of Canada: Coronavirus disease \(COVID-19\): Outbreak update](#)
- [Government of Canada: Coronavirus Infection: Symptoms and treatment](#)
- [Government of Canada: Travel advisories - Novel Coronavirus in China](#)
- [Government of Canada: Travel advisories - China](#)

World Health Organization (WHO)

The World Health Organization provides leadership on global health matters. The WHO monitors and assesses health issues such as COVID-19, provides technical support to countries and sets health standards. For more information about 2019-nCoV, see:

- [WHO: Coronavirus disease \(COVID-19\) outbreak](#)

If you have concerns or questions about your health, contact HealthLinkBC (**8-1-1**) at any time or speak with your health care provider.

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