

Frequently Asked Questions

January 28, 2020 Version

Coronavirus and Provincial Readiness

What are coronaviruses?

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).

Some human coronaviruses spread easily between people, while others do not.

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

- Older people;
- People with chronic disease (for example, diabetes, cancer, heart, renal or chronic lung disease).

What is the Wuhan novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV)?

On December 31, 2019, Chinese health authorities identified a new (or novel) coronavirus (referred to as 2019-nCoV) through a series of reported cases of pneumonia in Wuhan, China.

What are symptoms of coronavirus?

Symptoms of coronavirus include:

- Fever
- Cough
- Difficulty breathing

In severe cases, death can be an outcome.

How do I know if I or my loved one is at risk for contracting coronavirus?

The signs and symptoms of the novel coronavirus are similar to influenza and the common cold. However, you are at risk of contracting novel coronavirus if you have recently travelled to Wuhan, China or have been in contact with someone who has symptoms that has recently travelled to Wuhan, China. Given this situation is rapidly evolving, please visit the [Government of Canada's Travel Advisories](#) page for current updates.

How do I protect myself or my loved one from communicable diseases?

To reduce exposure to and transmission of a range of illnesses, including coronaviruses, you should follow usual health precautions such as:

- Washing your hands often;
- Avoiding contact with people who are sick;
- Covering your mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze.

If you are travelling to an area known to have cases of coronavirus, be sure to avoid:

- High-risk areas such as farms, live animal markets and areas where animals may be slaughtered;
- Contact with animals (alive or dead), including pigs, chickens, ducks and wild birds;
- Surfaces with animal droppings or secretions on them.

What happens if I feel ill after I travel?

If symptoms of an existing medical condition worsen while travelling, and you are still sick when you return to Canada:

- Tell a flight attendant or a border services officer when you arrive so they can decide whether you need further medical assessment.

If you are sick after you return to Canada:

- Contact the Durham Region Health Department at 1-800-372-1102 or contact your health care provider and tell them the countries you visited, and if you received medical care.

If you were sick while you were away:

- Contact the Durham Region Health Department at 1-800-372-1102 or contact your health care provider/see a health care provider and tell them the countries you visited, and if you received medical care.
- Tell a flight attendant or a border services officer when you arrive and they will decide whether you need further medical assessment.

How do we treat coronaviruses?

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

People are advised to:

- Drink plenty of fluids;
- Get rest and sleep as much as possible;
- Try a humidifier or a hot shower to help with a sore throat or cough.

If symptoms feel worse than a standard cold, contact your health care practitioner.

What if I have more questions, who can I contact?

Telehealth at 1-866-797-0000 **or** visit the MOH Coronavirus website - <https://www.ontario.ca/page/wuhan-novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov>

Lakeridge Health's Preparations for Novel Coronavirus

Is Lakeridge Health Prepared for Novel Coronavirus?

Yes. Lakeridge Health is well prepared if a coronavirus case is identified in our organization. In response to the emerging respiratory infections and seasonal influenza, Lakeridge Health has robust screening and infection prevention and control procedures already in place that all team members adhere to.

Lakeridge Health has been working closely with the Ministry of Health (MOH) and the Ontario Hospital Association on provincial readiness. Information to support the provincial response is circulated through Emergency Management Ontario's Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) to ensure consistent, coordinated communications and information throughout the province.

Lakeridge Health has also been developing and coordinating a local response in collaboration with our partners, including Durham Region Health Department, EMS and community providers.

Over the past few weeks, we mobilized the Emerging Disease Committee to lead our internal response. Led by Infection Prevention and Control (IPAC) with clinical and support services leaders from across the organization, the Committee has been actively reviewing organizational processes, procedures and emergency preparedness for all areas across the organization. The Committee reviewed business continuity plans and supply chain management activities to ensure that the organization is as fully prepared as possible.

We have a coordinated communications strategy with daily updates to the team and a dedicated intranet site. Key information is also posted on our website.

How are people identified at Lakeridge Health?

In response to the emerging respiratory infections and seasonal influenza, Lakeridge Health has robust screening and infection prevention and control procedures at all emergency departments (EDs).

This screening is a key response to identify and immediately isolate anyone who meets the criteria for novel coronavirus.

All patients coming to our emergency departments are immediately screened for symptoms of respiratory illness and asked about their travel history to identify if they meet the criteria for a person at risk of novel coronavirus.

What steps are taken to protect staff and the public if someone is suspected of having novel coronavirus?

If the patient has respiratory symptoms and has travelled to an at-risk country within 14 days or have had close contact with a confirmed or probable case of novel coronavirus or close contact with a person with respiratory illness who has been to Wuhan, China within 14 days prior to becoming ill, the patients and their accompanying family members/caregivers are immediately relocated to a negative pressure isolation room and provided with Personal Protective Equipment.

All members of the team entering the isolation room wear Personal Protective Equipment – N95 mask, eye shield, gown and gloves.

A physician assesses the patient and family members/caregivers. Should a suspected case of novel coronavirus be identified, test samples to confirm coronavirus are sent to the Public Health Ontario Laboratory and the National Microbiology Laboratory (NML).

Any individual with symptoms remains in isolation until test results are confirmed. Anyone who is asymptomatic may be discharged home, where they will be monitored by public health if required.

How are people with potential novel coronavirus cared for?

Patients are cared for by physicians and the care team in the isolation room until they are well and no longer have symptoms. Following an assessment by the physician, the patient may be discharged home if they are asymptomatic. They will be monitored by public health at home as required.