



Frequently Asked Questions

February 24, 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 COVID-19?

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 one of the countries that is identified as being at risk or have been in contact with someone who has this new virus or has symptoms and has recently travelled to an affected country. 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 and/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: 1-866-797-0000 or visit the MOH COVID-19 website - <https://www.ontario.ca/page/wuhan-novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov>

Lakeridge Health's Preparations for Coronavirus

Is Lakeridge Health Prepared for COVID-19?

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 have 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.

Our Emerging Disease Committee is leading our internal response. The Committee, led by Infection Prevention and Control (IPAC) with clinical and support services leaders from across the organization, is actively preparing and adjusting our organizational processes, procedures and emergency preparedness as the situation evolves.

We have a coordinated communications strategy with daily updates with key team members 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 and ambulatory clinics are 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 COVID-19.

Lakeridge Health's current (February 24) COVID-19 screening criteria includes asking patients if they have travelled within 14 days prior to symptom onset in the following countries: China, Hong Kong, Japan, Macau, Malaysia, Republic of Korea, Singapore, Taiwan, Thailand, Iran, Italy and Cambodia. These are countries with significant and/or increasing cases of community-based COVID-19.

What steps are taken to protect staff and the public if there is someone 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 COVID-19 or close contact with a person with respiratory illness who has been to an identified affected country 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.