



SUBJECT: Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV) from Wuhan, China
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To: Physicians, Hospital Emergency Departments, Primary Care Providers
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Background

On December 31, 2019, the World Health Organization (WHO) was informed of a cluster of pneumonia cases of unknown cause in Wuhan, China (population 11 million). The initial cases were linked to a seafood wholesale market that has since been closed.^{1,2,3} Over the last few weeks, the situation has evolved and is being monitored as an emerging global outbreak.

The cause of the illness has since been identified as a novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV).^{1,2,3} Beginning January 22, 2020 suspected and confirmed cases of 2019-nCoV are reportable to Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health (WDGPH).

Hundreds of cases have been reported globally with the vast majority from China. Other countries have identified cases including: Thailand, Japan, South Korea, Vietnam, Singapore, Taiwan and the U.S.A. There have been reported deaths, with most occurring among older adults with underlying medical conditions.^{2,3}

Airport screening protocols are in place and there are no direct flights from Wuhan, China to any city in Canada. The Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) has assessed the public health risk associated with 2019-nCoV as **low** for Canadians, including Canadian travelers. This situation is continually being reassessed as new information becomes available.

About the Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV)

The 2019-nCoV belongs to the Coronavirus family, which cause a wide range of illnesses ranging from the common cold to Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) and Middle Eastern Respiratory Syndrome (MERS). The SARS and MERS coronaviruses are known to cause severe illness.³ The morbidity, mortality and transmission potential of 2019-nCoV are not yet fully understood.

Investigation of this outbreak is ongoing and health care partners will be updated as new information becomes available. The Ministry of Health has provided guidance regarding the provincial case definition (attached) and management of 2019-nCoV in clinical settings. Pending more specific guidance, please refer to resources developed for the management of Middle East Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus (MERS-CoV) available on the Ministry of Health's website.¹

Precautions for Physician's Office

Ensure callers to your office are screened specifically for travel to Wuhan, China in the previous 14 days before arranging to see them.

If callers report fever and acute respiratory symptoms with NO travel to Wuhan, they can be seen in the office using droplet/contact precautions. Consider other seasonal circulating respiratory viruses including influenza as potential causes of illness.

For callers with fever and acute respiratory symptoms who have travelled to Wuhan in the last 14 days: Advise the caller to be seen in the local emergency department. Please advise the emergency department that the person is coming for assessment of 2019-nCoV. **Please report this to WDGPH at 519-822-2715 x4752.**

Precautions for Hospitals

Individuals who present with fever and acute respiratory symptoms who have travelled to Wuhan, China in the last 14 days should be placed in airborne/contact precautions in a single room with negative pressure. Fitted N95 masks should be worn during patient interactions.

Prior to testing, notify the Hospital IPAC department and **contact WDGPH**. Testing for 2019-nCoV requires prior approval by the PHO Laboratory before submission.¹

Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health will continue to update health care partners as new information becomes available.

References

1. Ontario. Ministry of Health. Memo to health system partners. 2020 January 10.
2. World Health Organization. Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV) situation report-1. 2020 January 21. [cited 2020 Jan 23]. Available from: <https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/coronaviruse/situation-reports/20200121-sitrep-1-2019-ncov.pdf>
3. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. 2019 Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV), Wuhan, China. 2020 January 22. [cited 2020 Jan 23]. Available from: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/summary.html>

For more information, refer to contact:

Program: Control of Infectious Diseases

Contact: 1-800-265-7293 ext. 4752; after hours 1-877-884-8653

Website: www.wdgpUBLICHEALTH.ca