

MEMORANDUM

TO: Educational Facilities in the Niagara Region

FROM: Niagara Region Public Health and Emergency Services Infectious Disease program

REFERENCE: Novel Coronavirus (2019 – nCoV) Question & Answer

DATE: January 28, 2020

Niagara Region Public Health and Emergency Services (NRPH&ES) is closely monitoring an outbreak caused by a novel (new) coronavirus first identified in Wuhan City, Hubei Province, China. The total number of cases internationally are changing daily.

What is Coronavirus?

- Coronaviruses (CoV) are a large family of viruses that cause illness ranging from the common cold to more severe diseases such as Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS-CoV) and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS-CoV)
- The new (novel) coronavirus is a new virus in this family which we have not previously seen

What is the Risk from the New Coronavirus

- Our assessment, and the consensus of international experts, is that the risk for Canadians is low
- Only those who have travelled to Wuhan City in China are at greater risk
- Canada has no direct flights from Wuhan City in China, and the number of travellers arriving indirectly from Wuhan City in China is low
- If you **have travelled to Wuhan City in China in the past 14 days and have recently developed respiratory symptoms**, avoid contact with others and contact your health care professional immediately. **Call ahead to allow health care staff to take appropriate precautions.**

What is the Severity of the New Coronavirus?

- Across the globe, we are seeing the majority of cases having mild to moderate illness
- Elderly people and those with underlying medical conditions are often experiencing more severe illness

What is being done locally to protect from this New Coronavirus?

- NRPH&ES is closely monitoring the evolving Novel Coronavirus outbreak in east Asia, and the developments in North America
- NRPH&ES is actively collaborating with local hospitals, primary care, emergency services, the Ministry of Health, Public Health Ontario, and other provincial and federal partners to protect Niagara residents

What Are the Symptoms of New Coronavirus?

- Common signs of infection include respiratory symptoms, fever, cough, shortness of breath and difficulty breathing

- In more severe cases, infection can cause pneumonia, and rarely, death

How Can I Prevent Becoming Ill?

- Wash your hands often
- Avoid contact with persons who are sick
- Practice proper cough and sneeze etiquette
- Keep your distance from people who are sick

How is the New Coronavirus Transmitted?

- The virus transmits from person to person through coughing and sneezing, just like the common cold or flu

What Travel Precautions Should I Take?

- If you are planning to travel you should consult the [Health Canada Advisory](#)
- Canadians should always tell their health care providers about their travel if they become ill after returning to Canada

What Airport Screening Protocols Have Been Implemented?

- Canada has a number of standard border measures in place to prevent the entry of infectious diseases in Canada
- All international travelers arriving in Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver international airports will be asked additional screening questions to determine if they have visited Wuhan City in China
- Those experiencing flu-like symptoms will be referred to the public health agency's quarantine officer

Is There a Vaccine That Protects Against Coronaviruses in Humans?

- Currently, there is no vaccine that protects against coronaviruses in humans

For further information, please go to www.niagararegion.ca/health or contact Niagara Region Public Health & Emergency Services, Infectious Disease program at **1-888-505-6074 or 905-688-8248 ext. 7330**