

## MEMORANDUM

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**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

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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](http://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**