

January 29, 2020 – 2:07 p.m.



All-staff bulletin

Updated information for all staff regarding the novel coronavirus

The situation regarding novel coronavirus (named 2019-nCoV) – a respiratory virus that was first reported in Wuhan, China – continues to evolve.

On January 28, B.C.'s Provincial Health Officer (PHO) Dr. Bonnie Henry announced that a Lower Mainland male has tested positive for the coronavirus. You can [read more here](#) or review the attached update from the Vancouver Coastal Health Chief Medical Health Officer.

Despite the increase in the number of cases world-wide, the risk to Canadians continues to be low. That said, we want to continue to be prepared and stay vigilant for possible cases.

PHSA, including the BC Centre for Disease Control (BCCDC), is working closely with provincial and federal partners to monitor the situation closely, to ensure our level of preparedness is high and to respond to this situation as required.

Please read below for information and key updates, including changes to the case definition.

For clinicians and staff in patient care

With respect to identifying potential cases early

Clinicians in B.C. are asked to review the case definition for novel coronavirus regularly as it is subject to frequent updates. The case definition can be found on the BCCDC website:

[http://www.bccdc.ca/health-professionals/clinical-resources/case-definitions/novel-coronavirus-\(2019-ncov\)](http://www.bccdc.ca/health-professionals/clinical-resources/case-definitions/novel-coronavirus-(2019-ncov))

The current case definition asks clinics to screen patients with:

- Fever and respiratory illness, with or without pneumonia, AND
- Recent travel to **Hubei Province (includes Wuhan City)**, China within 14 days prior to symptom onset OR
- Another potentially relevant exposure (e.g. close contact with someone who was ill and had recently travelled to **Hubei Province (includes Wuhan City)**, China

Please notify medical microbiologist on call (at 604-875-2161) of such patients.



Recommendations for assessment and care of a patient at risk

For all patients with acute respiratory illness/pneumonia and/or under investigation for 2019 nCoV:

- Provide the patient with a surgical mask
- Be diligent about hand hygiene
- Ask patients presenting with acute respiratory illness/pneumonia about their travel history
- Place patients with acute respiratory illness/pneumonia in single-occupancy as soon as possible and use **DROPLET and CONTACT** precautions (including eye protection) for all care activities
- Practice cough etiquette; cover nose and mouth during coughing or sneezing with tissue or elbow
- Use extreme care when doffing/removing PPE

If you think you have a patient who may fit the case definition described above:

Promptly notify the medical microbiologist on call for PHSA at 604-875-2161 and they will notify the medical health officer on PHSA's behalf if a patient meets the case definition.

Additionally, as previously recommended, N95 respirators with eye protection should be donned during the aerosol-generating procedures listed below for patients who meet the case definition:

1. Intubation and related procedures
2. CPR
3. Bronchoscopy
4. Sputum Induction
5. Nebulized therapy or high concentration oxygen therapy
6. CPAP or BiPAP
7. Open airway suctioning
8. While there is not a specific recommendation in B.C. to wear an N95 respirator for nasopharyngeal swabs, and aspirates, in certain populations such as children where coughing might be more expected, planning to wear an N95 respirator is recommended.

The BCCDC Public Health Laboratory (PHL) has updated laboratory guidance for 2019-nCoV diagnostic testing: <http://www.bccdc.ca/health-professionals/data-reports/communicable->

[diseases/emerging-respiratory-virus-updates](#). Such testing requires notification and consultation with the local medical health officer, which will be facilitated by the Infection Prevention and Control team.

What about direction for staff about their own health?

If you feel ill, stay home

At this time, public health officials remind everyone, during cold and flu season follow proper hand hygiene, cover your mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing, avoid others who are unwell, and stay home when you are sick.

What if you have just travelled home from China?

Our PHO has confirmed that staff returning from the affected regions do NOT need to self-isolate or work from home for any length of time. Returning travellers should self-monitor for symptoms, such as fever or a sore throat. Those who start feeling unwell should call their care provider in advance or call 8-1-1.

Speaking with patients, families and visitors

When asked for more information by the public, please direct them as follows:

- If they have questions about their own personal health, or have symptoms, please ask them to call 8-1-1 or their health care provider
- If they have general questions, please ask them to call their local public health unit

More information

BCCDC www.bccdc.ca

World Health Organization <https://www.who.int/>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention <https://www.cdc.gov/>