

# Coronavirus COVID-19 Pandemic Response Alert

What You Need to Know

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On March 11, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the COVID-19 Coronavirus to be a global health pandemic.

### **Stay home as much as possible.**

If you are not working in essential services, please work from home if possible until further notice.

In order to support public health systems around the world and promote prevention, Health Canada is encouraging all Canadians to practice self-isolation: work from home as much as possible. This means eliminating all non-essential travel, appointments, in-person meetings and avoiding all public gatherings.

Taking action now will greatly help our healthcare institutions cope with the pandemic and ensure our most vulnerable citizens avoid exposure to COVID-19.

EQ Care Community Members:

Rest assured, we are monitoring the situation closely, and are up-to-date on all regional, national and international health authority bulletins.

In the coming days, it is possible that wait times may increase but **no patient will be turned away** and no disruptions in service are anticipated or have been reported.

**From symptoms to prevention and risk assessment, here is everything you need to know about the Coronavirus.**

**Q: What is Coronavirus?**

COVID-19, or more commonly known as the Coronavirus, is a member of a large family of viruses that include illnesses ranging from the common cold to more severe ones such as Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS-CoV) and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS-CoV). This group of viruses often cause mild symptoms but can be more dangerous for those with pre-existing health conditions and respiratory illnesses.

The virus is capable of spreading person to person, in a limited capacity. Person-to-person spread requires close contact (6-foot distance) and is thought to occur mainly via respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes, similar to how influenza and other respiratory pathogens spread.

**Q: Who is at risk of being infected?**

According to federal health authorities, 30-70% of Canadians may eventually contract COVID-19. Those with weakened immune systems are especially vulnerable, and avoiding public spaces is especially important for these populations.

Those most at risk: People aged 65 and over, those with underlying medical conditions (e.g. heart disease, hypertension, diabetes, chronic respiratory diseases, cancers, etc.) and anyone with a compromised immune system from a medical condition or treatment (eg. chemotherapy).

**Q:** How can I prevent infection?

Stay home as much as possible. Avoid all non-essential outings and all public gatherings until further notice. According to the Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), symptoms of the 2019-nCoV may appear in as few as 2 days or as long as 14 days after exposure to the virus.

There is currently no vaccine to prevent COVID-19 infection though possible vaccines and specific drug treatments are currently being tested through clinical trials. The best way to prevent infection is to avoid being exposed to the virus. Here is how you can minimize your risk of exposure and infection:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not available.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Stay home especially if you are showing any symptoms of sickness.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.
- Avoid contact with sick people, especially if they have fever, cough, or difficulty breathing.

**Q:** What are the Symptoms of Coronavirus?

**Symptoms can include:**

- Fever
- Cough
- Shortness of breath
- Sore throat
- Respiratory symptoms
- General feeling of malaise/unwell
- Headache
- Runny nose
- Pneumonia

## Important public health resources:

At the moment, COVID-19 is being studied by governments and medical researchers worldwide. To bring together updates, [the Government of Canada has set up a website](#) to bring timely updates, as well as advice on what to do if you've become ill, or come into contact with someone who is ill.

World Health Organization (WHO)

US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

### Provincial Health Authorities:

British Columbia

Alberta

Saskatchewan

Manitoba

Ontario

Quebec

New Brunswick

Prince Edward Island

Newfoundland and Labrador

Nova Scotia

Nunavut

Northwest Territories

Yukon

### Metropolitan Health Authorities:

Vancouver

Toronto

Montreal

Ottawa

### Metropolitan Transit Authorities:

Vancouver

Toronto

Montreal

Ottawa



EQ Care is happy to help guide you and answer any additional questions you may have; we can provide you with local resources and assist in navigating the healthcare landscape for Coronavirus diagnosis and treatment throughout Canada.

If you think you may have Coronavirus please seek medical care as soon as possible. However, keep in mind that traveling to clinics or emergency rooms can increase the risk of exposure to others, should you be infected with the virus. Please report any recent travel to your healthcare professional.

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