



31 JAN 2020,

Dear Health Director:

We are writing to provide an update about the outbreak of respiratory illness in China caused by a newly discovered type of coronavirus. We continue to receive daily updates from the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care of Ontario, and the Public Health Agency of Canada. On January 30, the World Health Organization declared the coronavirus outbreak in China a “public health emergency of international importance”. This has caused concern for some communities.

In this letter we answer some new questions that we have received recently.

What is the risk level in Ontario and Canada now?

The risk in Ontario and Canada remains **low**.

How many people in Ontario and Canada have been diagnosed with this infection?

In Ontario, there have been two people who travelled from China have been diagnosed with coronavirus. In British Columbia, one person who travelled from China has been diagnosed with this virus. All three are recovering from their illness.

Why did the World Health Organization declare the coronavirus outbreak in China a “public health emergency of international importance”?

Unlike Canada, some countries do not have strong public health and health care systems. The World Health Organization (WHO) is concerned about spread of this virus to those countries. By declaring a public health emergency, the WHO has alerted all countries to be prepared for the virus and work together to take action to prevent spread. Canada and Ontario have already been doing this and will continue to do so.

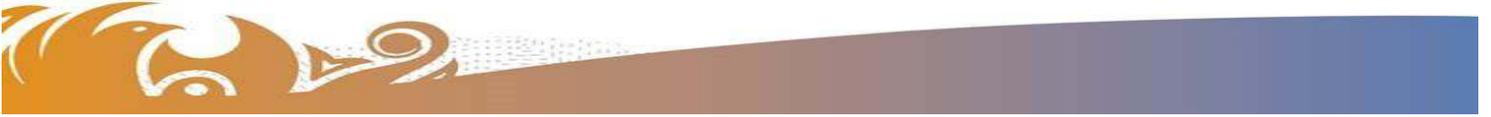
There is no public health emergency in Canada or Ontario.

Where can I get accurate information about the coronavirus?

We have learned of incorrect information posted on social media and the internet. We encourage everyone to get information from reliable sources. Two good websites that are updated regularly are:

Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care

<https://www.ontario.ca/page/wuhan-novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov>



Government of Canada

<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/coronavirus.html>

What is the First Nations and Inuit Health Branch in Ontario doing?

Although the risk is low, we are preparing in case we see more infections in Ontario. By doing this we will be ready to treat people quickly and prevent the spread of infection.

We are communicating regularly with First Nations partners, the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care of Ontario, the Public Health Agency of Canada, and health units in Ontario so that we have a coordinated approach. We have provided guidance to nurses on how to prepare for a possible patient with coronavirus, and what to do if a patient comes to a nursing station or health centre. This guidance is the same as for any clinic in Ontario.

How can people prevent getting sick with any respiratory virus?

There are things people can do to protect themselves and others:

- wash your hands frequently
- cough or sneeze into your sleeve or a tissue
- if you are sick, stay home until you are well

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