



Novel Coronavirus

News of the current outbreak of the coronavirus, novel coronavirus or 2019-nCoV, which originated in Wuhan, China is reminiscent of the 2003 SARS outbreak and has many people concerned about another pandemic. However, Canadian medical officers of health say that the risk of this new virus to Canadians remains low. At the time of writing there have been two confirmed cases both from Ontario and one unconfirmed case in British Columbia. All three people have recently spent time in Wuhan, China.

Coronavirus is a family of viruses that includes SARS (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome), MERS (Middle-East Respiratory Syndrome) and the common cold.

Currently there is no vaccine against 2019-nCoV but scientists are actively working towards one. The incubation period of the virus appears to be up to 14 days and symptoms can include fever, cough, and difficulty breathing. If you experience these symptoms and have reason to believe you have the 2019-nCoV virus (ex. recent travel to/from high-risk zone or in contact with others from high-risk zones), talk to your doctor and take precautions, such as self-isolation, to avoid spreading the illness.

As with any respiratory illness, there are steps to take to help reduce the risk of falling ill:

- ✓ Frequently clean hands by using alcohol-based hand rub or soap and water;
- ✓ When coughing and sneezing cover mouth and nose with flexed elbow or tissue – throw tissue away immediately and wash hands;
- ✓ Avoid close contact with anyone who has fever and cough;
- ✓ If you have fever, cough and difficulty breathing seek medical care early and share previous travel history with your health care provider;
- ✓ When visiting live markets in areas currently experiencing cases of novel coronavirus, avoid direct unprotected contact with live animals and surfaces in contact with animals;
- ✓ The consumption of raw or undercooked animal products should be avoided. Raw meat, milk or animal organs should be handled with care, to avoid cross-contamination with uncooked foods, as per good food safety practices.
- ✓ Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.

Source: www.who.int