

Novel Coronavirus Update

January 28, 2020

This morning, Health Minister Adrian Dix and Provincial Health Officer Dr. Bonnie Henry announced that the [first presumptive positive case of novel coronavirus](#) (known as 2019-nCoV) in BC has been identified in the Vancouver Coast Health (VCH) region. The patient is in isolation at home and poses no risk to the public. VCH Public Health is currently monitoring the patient and their close contacts.

Even with this presumptive case, the risk to residents in the VCH region and in B.C. remains low. There is no ongoing risk posed to the public, and health care staff in our region are prepared should other cases arise.

The novel coronavirus (named 2019-nCoV) causes a respiratory disease that was first reported in Wuhan, China. VCH Medical Health Officers, our provincial partners and the Public Health Agency of Canada continue to actively monitor the situation and have protocols in place to screen for infections in any returning travellers. While there have been cases identified outside of China, all of these individuals are known to have recent travel to the Wuhan area. The Public Health Agency of Canada continues to reassure the public that the risk to Canadians is low and that our public health system is well positioned to identify and manage any additional cases.

All travellers returning from the Wuhan area who do not have symptoms are being advised to monitor for symptoms for a 2 week period. At this time, reports indicate that this virus is spread only after symptoms develop. There is no reason for travellers returning from Wuhan, or other locations in China, without any symptoms to be prevented from working, going to school or attending events unless instructed to do so by Public Health. There is also no evidence that novel coronavirus is circulating in the Chinese Canadian community.

In the meantime, we are reminding everyone to follow proper respiratory hygiene etiquette during the cold and flu season. This includes proper hand-washing with soap and water, covering your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing, and staying home when you are sick.

We do not recommend that the general public or staff wear masks. Surgical masks are not designed for this purpose and are unlikely to provide significant protection. There is also no need to post signage, stockpile supplies or to implement special cleaning procedures.

More information about novel coronavirus can be found on the BC Centre for Disease Control (BCCDC) website: www.bccdc.ca/about/news-stories/stories/2020/information-on-novel-coronavirus.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact your local Medical Health Officer.