What is COVID-19?

- A newly identified virus from the “coronavirus” family
- Originated in animals
- First human cases identified in Wuhan, China in late December 2019
- New virus identified (“sequenced”) January 7, 2020
What are the symptoms of COVID-19?

- Fever and dry cough are the most common symptoms
- Other symptoms: Headache, shortness of breath, diarrhea
- Symptoms are mild in most people
- Older people and those with other underlying health conditions, such as heart disease or lung disease, may get more serious illness
How is COVID-19 transmitted?

• Small droplets of fluid from the nose or mouth of someone who is sick
  • Spread by coughing or sneezing
  • Travel about 1 metre and land on surfaces, and survive for several hours
• Touching contaminated surfaces and then touching your eyes, nose or mouth can result in infection
• It is NOT spread by people without symptoms
• It is less easily transmitted than the flu
• Most transmission occurs in households
What is the treatment for COVID-19 infection?

- Almost all infections resolve on their own
- No specific drugs yet for treatment (research trials underway)
- No vaccine yet (more than 20 are under development)
- Treatment is supportive care
How has COVID-19 spread?

China:
• Began in Wuhan end of Dec. 2019
• Spread to all 31 provinces by end of Jan. 2020
• Now resolving
• 80,422 cases (March 4, 2020)
• Overall “attack rate”: 0.006% of the population (6/100,000 people)
• Most spread occurred in households: 3-10% of household contacts infected
COVID-19 in other countries

• Cases reported from 76 countries (March 4, 2020): 12,668 cases
• Outbreaks: South Korea, Iran, Northern Italy
• Other countries: Small number of imported cases, some local transmission
• Canada: 34 cases (March 4)
  • BC: 13 cases (4 have fully recovered)
  • New severe case reported today in VGH Intensive Care Unit; all others recovering at home
• No evidence of community transmission anywhere in Canada
How serious is COVID-19 infection?

- >80% of people have mild or moderate disease
- Case-fatality rate (globally): 3.4%
- Low (<1.0%) for young adults; no deaths reported in young children
- Higher in the elderly and those with other chronic health conditions; nearly 15% over age 80 years

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\text{Case fatality rate} = \frac{\text{Deaths}}{\text{All cases}} = \frac{3,110 \text{ deaths} \times 100}{90,893 \text{ cases}} = 3.4\%
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Travel

• Check the Health Canada website for travel advisories
• Current advisories (March 4, 2020):
  • Avoid all travel to Hubei Province, China
  • Avoid non-essential travel to China, Iran, Northern Italy, some regions of South Korea
  • Travellers returning from Hubei Province, China and Iran are asked to self-isolate at home for 14 days after leaving; call public health if symptoms start
  • Travellers from other countries with cases do not need to self-isolate but should stay home if symptoms develop, and call public health
Canada

• No evidence of community transmission anywhere in Canada
• No need to cancel “mass gatherings” or celebrations
• It’s safe to go to school, work and to houses of worship
• It’s safe to receive care in hospitals and clinics
Are we prepared if cases increase?

• Planning underway; BC has an excellent public health system
• COVID-19 testing is available to all physicians – more than 1,000 patients have already been tested
  • Testing available in family doctor offices, Urgent Care Clinics
• Long term care facilities have protocols in place to monitor for respiratory illnesses and manage any respiratory outbreaks, and will be supported
• Hospitals are prepared to manage any serious cases
How can COVID-19 be prevented? Start now!

• Stay home if you are sick
• Cover your cough
• Don’t touch your eyes, nose and mouth
• Wash your hands!
Where can I get further information?

- The BC Nurse Line (811) is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week
- Vancouver Coastal Health: [www.vch.ca](http://www.vch.ca)
- BC Centre for Disease Control: [www.bccdc.ca](http://www.bccdc.ca)
- Canadian Travel Advisories: [www.travel.gc.ca](http://www.travel.gc.ca)
- World Health Organization: [www.who.int](http://www.who.int)