

February 27th, 2020

COVID-19 Update

As the COVID-19 outbreak continues to expand globally, and with the recognition that more regions are experiencing localized transmission, we are recommending changes to the COVID-19 testing approach and follow up.

The areas considered for testing have expanded.

Medical Health Officers do not need to be notified for COVID-19 testing when the below criteria are met:

- Patients with compatible symptoms (e.g., fever, cough, or difficulty breathing)

AND

- History of travel to affected areas (as of Feb. 26, 2020, affected areas include):
 - China
 - Hong Kong
 - Japan
 - Italy
 - Iran
 - South Korea
 - Singapore

within 14 days prior to illness onset

OR

- Other index of suspicion (e.g., contact with an ill person with travel to affected areas, contact with a confirmed or probable case of COVID-19).

Affected areas are changing rapidly, please consult the BCCDC web site for up to date affected areas:

[http://www.bccdc.ca/health-professionals/clinical-resources/novel-coronavirus-\(covid-19\)](http://www.bccdc.ca/health-professionals/clinical-resources/novel-coronavirus-(covid-19))

Indicate symptom and travel/contact criteria when submitting swab for testing.

We do not recommend COVID-19 testing for asymptomatic patients.

For patients meeting testing criteria:

- Give the patient a surgical mask to wear and place the patient in a separate room.
- Use contact and droplet precautions (gloves, gowns, surgical mask and eye protection), particularly during sample collection. N95 masks are not needed for sample collection or examination.
- Obtain a nasopharyngeal (NP) swab and throat swab (red top or blue top COPAN with UNIVERSAL TRANSPORT MEDIA (UTM)) and send both swabs to an Island Health laboratory. Ensure that the requisition indicates testing for “novel coronavirus” and **comments on symptoms and travel/contact history.**

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After Hours On Call

1.800.204.6166

Discharge planning:

- If the patient is well enough to return home, discharge the patient with a surgical mask and advise the patient to isolate at home.
- Provide the “Home Isolation” document to the patient (see attachment).
- Confirm the patient’s contact information. Clinicians should inform patients that they can call the BCCDC Coronavirus Hotline to receive their results and guidance regarding self-isolation. Should the swab results be positive, Public Health provides follow-up.

The BCCDC Coronavirus Hotline ([1-833-707-2792](tel:1-833-707-2792)) is available Monday through Friday, 8:30am to 4:30pm.

The BCCDC will notify Public Health Communicable Disease in the event of a positive COVID-19 result. Public Health will follow-up on all confirmed COVID-19 results.

When to notify the Medical Health Officer:

Notify the Medical Health Officer for cases where there is a high index of suspicion. This includes patients with:

- **Severe** respiratory presentations (particularly lower respiratory symptoms)
AND
- Travel to affected areas (as of Feb. 26, 2020, affected areas include: China, Hong Kong, Japan, Italy, Iran, South Korea, and Singapore) in the last 14 days before illness onset

OR

- Respiratory symptoms (e.g. fever, cough, or difficulty breathing)
AND
- Travel to Hubei province in the 14 days before onset of illness

OR

- Close household contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19 within 14 days before their illness onset.

Notifying the MHO ensures tracking of specimens at the BCCDC and early public health intervention. It is not required to notify the MHO when testing patients with a lower index of suspicion.

Yours in Health,

Dee Hoyano, MD, FRCPC
Medical Health Officer

HOME ISOLATION

while waiting for novel coronavirus (COVID-19) results



Your doctor has determined that you can safely be cared for at home.

To prevent the spread of contagious respiratory illnesses including novel coronavirus, we advise that you self-isolate at home until your test results are complete.

To get your results, call:

Coronavirus Hotline 1-833-707-2792

(M-F 8:30 a.m.- 4:30 p.m.) Results usually available within 2 days

- If your results show you don't have the novel coronavirus, the nurse at the hotline will explain the next steps.
- If your results show you have the novel coronavirus, continue to self-isolate. Someone from Public Health will call you.

HOW TO ISOLATE YOURSELF

Stay home

- Remain in your home except to get urgent medical care.
- Do not go to work, school, or public areas (e.g. places of worship, stores, shopping malls, and restaurants). Your doctor may provide you with a note excusing you from work or school.
- Cancel non-urgent appointments.
- Do not use public transportation or taxis.

Notify health care facilities before you visit

- Call ahead before visiting a health care facility, and advise them that you have or are being tested for novel coronavirus.
- Remind health care providers when you arrive. This will help health care facilities to take steps to keep other people from becoming infected.

Monitor your symptoms

- Seek medical attention if you have trouble breathing, are unable to drink fluids, or if your illness is getting worse.
- Notify health care facilities and health care providers (e.g. emergency departments, ambulance paramedics, doctor's offices) before you visit.

Wear a face mask

- Wear a face mask when you visit a health care facility.
- If your mask gets wet or dirty, change it.
- Face masks are available at the entrance to health care buildings. N95 respirator masks are not required.

Separate from household members

- If you have a mask, use it in shared spaces or maintain a two metre distance from household members.
- Stay and sleep in a well-ventilated room separate from other people.
- Use a separate bathroom if available.
- Household members should stay in another home or place of residence if possible, especially if they have compromised immune systems or chronic health conditions.
- Restrict visitors until you recover and confirm you are not infected with coronavirus.
- Avoid sharing household items such as dishes, cups, eating utensils, towels, bedding, or other items. After using these items, wash them thoroughly with soap and water.

Maintain good hygiene

- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or into your sleeve when you cough or sneeze. Throw used tissues into a lined trash can in your room before disposal. Immediately wash your hands.
- Wash your hands often and thoroughly with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use disposable paper towels when possible. For more information search for 'hand washing' at healthlinkbc.ca.
- Flush toilet with the lid down – the virus may also be present in stool.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces once per day with regular household disinfectant containing one part bleach to nine parts water.