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Health Alert: Novel coronavirus outbreak, Wuhan, Central Hubei, China

On January 12, 2020 the World Health Organization (WHO) announced the identification of a new coronavirus in China, associated with an ongoing outbreak of viral pneumonia. As of January 16, 2020, 43 cases of the novel coronavirus (nCoV) have been diagnosed. Most cases have been diagnosed in China, while one was diagnosed in Thailand (traveler from Wuhan, China), and another in Japan (Japanese citizen with travel history to Wuhan). Symptom onset dates range from December 8, 2019 to January 5, 2020, and all but one indicated exposure to live animal markets in Wuhan, Central Hubei, China. Among the cases reported to date, five are severely ill and two have died.

Chinese authorities continue to investigate the outbreak, isolate cases and follow-up with close contacts. Presently there are no reports of cases among health care workers or close contacts of the cases; based on the available information there is limited potential of human-to-human transmission, however further investigations are ongoing. The risk to Canadians travelling to China is low, as is the risk of disease importation and spread, including to Canada.

Both the WHO and the Public Health Agency of Canada are actively monitoring the situation. Manitoba Health, Seniors and Active Living continues to work with our provincial and national partners to monitor the situation. It is important to note that since January 13, 2020, Ontario's Public Health Laboratory has tested 2 individuals with respiratory illness and a history of travel from Wuhan with no evidence of nCoV infection found in either individual.

While the risk to Manitobans is low, Health Care Providers should be vigilant for persons with symptoms compatible with the novel coronavirus and relevant travel history (see below):

- Fever and acute respiratory illness, with or without pneumonia, **AND**
- Recent travel to Wuhan, Central Hubei, China within the 14 days prior to symptom onset; **OR**
- Close contact with an ill person associated with the outbreak in Wuhan, Central Hubei, China.

Infection Prevention and Control:

- If the person has recently traveled to ***Wuhan, Central Hubei, China*** or been in close contact with an ill person associated with the outbreak:
 - Do not cohort with other patients.
 - Designate a separate waiting area/ space for persons with respiratory symptoms. Provide tissues, alcohol based hand rub and a waste receptacle.
 - Follow Droplet/ Contact precautions (see MHSAL *Routine Practices and Additional Precautions document* [\[https://www.gov.mb.ca/health/publichealth/cdc/docs/ipc/rpap.pdf\]](https://www.gov.mb.ca/health/publichealth/cdc/docs/ipc/rpap.pdf) for further information).
 - Notify Infectious Diseases on-call (204-787-2071) and regional Infection Prevention and Control/ designate
 - Perform any [aerosol generating medical procedures](#) (AGMPs) in an airborne infection isolation room (AIIR) with minimal staff, wearing N95 respirators

https://www.wrha.mb.ca/extranet/ipc/files/manuals/acutecare/RS_Protection_AG_MPs.pdf).

Additional information is available from the Public Health Agency of Canada:

- *Public Health Management of Human Illness Associated with MERS-CoV* (<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/emerging-respiratory-pathogens/coronavirus/public-health-management-human-illness-associated-middle-east-respiratory-syndrome-coronavirus-mers-interim-guidance-containment-when-imported-cases.html>), and
- *Infection Prevention and Control Guidance for Acute Care Settings for MERS-CoV* (<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/publications/diseases-conditions/infection-prevention-control-guidance-middle-east-respiratory-syndrome-coronavirus-mers-cov-acute-care-settings.html>).

While there are no travel restrictions at present, the Government of Canada recommends that travellers practice usual precautions, and avoid high-risk areas such as live animal markets (<https://travel.gc.ca/travelling/advisories/pneumonia-china>).

Testing:

Definitive testing for the nCoV is being developed, and further guidance will be provided once more information becomes available.

Health care providers requesting testing for suspect nCoV cases should consult with an Infectious Disease specialist (204-787-2071 HSC paging service), who if clinical presentation and epidemiology is consistent, will notify the Medical Officer of Health (204-788-8666) and Cadham Provincial Laboratory.

Recommended specimens for investigation of suspect cases include standard respiratory microbiologic investigation (sputum for culture, nasopharyngeal swab/aspirate for viral detection, for severely ill patients deep lung specimens such as broncho-alveolar lavage or endotracheal secretions for culture or molecular-based viral detection) and serum specimens are also requested for other investigation of atypical pathogens (e.g. Mycoplasma). Stool specimens for viral detection may be indicated if there are significant gastrointestinal symptoms.

Collection of specimens for respiratory virus detection are available from Cadham Provincial Laboratory (<https://www.gov.mb.ca/health/publichealth/cpl/documents.html>).

More information on the nCoV outbreak is available on the WHO coronavirus site (<https://www.who.int/health-topics/coronavirus>)

Sincerely,

“Original Signed by”

Brent Roussin, MD, JD, MPH, FRCPC
Chief Provincial Public Health Officer