

Ministry of Health

## 2019 novel coronavirus (COVID-19)

On December 31, 2019, cases of an undiagnosed viral pneumonia were reported by health authorities in Wuhan, China. The cause was confirmed to be a new coronavirus, known as the 2019 novel coronavirus or COVID-19, which had not previously been identified in humans.

### What is the 2019 novel coronavirus (COVID-19)?

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses that can cause illnesses ranging from the common cold to more serious respiratory infections like bronchitis, pneumonia or severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS).

The 2019 novel coronavirus (COVID-19) causes a respiratory infection that originated in Hubei province (Wuhan), China.

The first presumptive case of this infection in Ontario was identified on January 25, 2020.

**To learn more about the 2019 novel coronavirus, visit [Ontario.ca/coronavirus](https://ontario.ca/coronavirus).**

### What are the symptoms?

Symptoms range from mild – like the flu and other common respiratory infections – to severe, and can include:

- fever
- cough
- difficulty breathing

Complications from the 2019 novel coronavirus can include serious conditions, like pneumonia or kidney failure, and in some cases, death.

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If your symptoms feel worse than a common cold (for example, fever, cough, difficulty breathing) **and** you have travelled to an affected area<sup>1</sup> within 14 days of symptom onset, call Telehealth Ontario at 1-866-797-0000 or contact your local public health unit ([health.gov.on.ca/en/common/system/services/phu/locations.aspx](https://health.gov.on.ca/en/common/system/services/phu/locations.aspx)). Be sure to mention your symptoms and your travel history, including the countries you visited.

If you return from an affected area, you may need to self-isolate for 14 days. You may have been exposed to the 2019 novel coronavirus during your travels and staying home and limiting contact with others can help prevent further spread. Please contact your local public health unit ([health.gov.on.ca/en/common/system/services/phu/locations.aspx](https://health.gov.on.ca/en/common/system/services/phu/locations.aspx)) for advice.

If you need immediate medical attention you should call 911 and mention your travel history and symptoms.

## How does the virus spread?

Coronaviruses are spread mainly from person to person through close contact, for example, in a household, workplace or health care centre.

## How can I protect myself against the 2019 novel coronavirus?

There is no vaccine available to protect against the 2019 novel coronavirus.

There are everyday actions that can help prevent the spread of germs that cause respiratory illnesses. Take these everyday steps to reduce exposure to the virus and protect your health:

- wash your hands often with soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizer
- sneeze and cough into your sleeve
- avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth

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<sup>1</sup> Please refer to [Ontario.ca/coronavirus](https://Ontario.ca/coronavirus) for current affected areas.

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- avoid contact with people who are sick
- stay home if you are sick

If you are travelling to an area known to have cases of coronavirus, be sure to avoid:

- high-risk areas such as farms, live animal markets and areas where animals may be slaughtered
- contact with animals (alive or dead), including pigs, chickens, ducks and wild birds
- surfaces with animal droppings or secretions on them

## Can I receive treatment for the 2019 novel coronavirus?

There are no specific treatments for coronaviruses, and there is no vaccine that protects against coronaviruses. Most people with common human coronavirus illnesses will recover on their own.

You should:

- drink plenty of fluids
- get rest and sleep as much as possible
- try a humidifier or a hot shower to help with a sore throat or cough

## What if I feel sick while travelling or after I get back?

If you become sick when you are travelling or after you return, avoid contact with others and call Telehealth Ontario at 1-866-797-0000 or contact your local public health unit ([health.gov.on.ca/en/common/system/services/phu/locations.aspx](https://health.gov.on.ca/en/common/system/services/phu/locations.aspx)).

Tell them:

- your symptoms
  - where you have been travelling or living
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- if you have had direct contact with animals (for example, visited a live animal market) or close contact with a sick person

If you feel sick during your flight to Canada or upon arrival, inform the flight attendant or a Canadian border services officer.

Learn about travel advisories related to the 2019 novel coronavirus at [travel.gc.ca/travelling/advisories/pneumonia-china](https://travel.gc.ca/travelling/advisories/pneumonia-china).

## What should I do if I think I have the virus?

If you develop symptoms of the 2019 novel coronavirus, call Telehealth Ontario for medical advice at 1-866-797-0000 or contact your local public health unit ([health.gov.on.ca/en/common/system/services/phu/locations.aspx](https://health.gov.on.ca/en/common/system/services/phu/locations.aspx)).

Be sure to mention your symptoms and your travel history, including the countries you visited.

If you need immediate medical attention, call 911 and mention your travel history and symptoms.

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