

PEMBROKE REGIONAL HOSPITAL

MEMO

TO: All Physicians, Staff and Volunteers

FROM: Kirsten Johnson Clinical Manager of
AMH, IPAC and Education
on behalf of the Infection Control Team

DATE: March 3rd, 2020

SUBJECT: Coronavirus Update

With Coronavirus still prevalent in the news and on social media, we thought it would be helpful and reassuring to provide an update about the illness itself and related information that might be helpful for you to know.

Coronaviruses (CoV) are a large family of viruses that cause illnesses ranging from the common cold to more serious respiratory infections.

The 2019 novel coronavirus (COVID-19) is a respiratory infection that originated in Wuhan, China. The symptoms of COVID-19, which can include fever and cough, are similar to other respiratory infections, including influenza. As a result, individuals who may simply have the flu are being tested out of abundance of caution and in line with Ontario's robust detection protocols. This means that **most individuals who are tested are unlikely to be infected** with the 2019 novel Coronavirus.

In Canada, as of March 2nd, the National Microbiology Laboratory (NML) has tested samples from 520 individuals. This includes testing done at the NML's mobile lab team in Trenton and Cornwall, Ontario. The total number of confirmed cases in Canada is currently 27: 18 in Ontario, eight in B.C. and one in Quebec.

Confirmed cases of COVID-19 do not change the public health response to date, as all necessary protocols and measures are already activated and in place.
The risk of spread of this virus within Canada remains low at this time.

Canada has multiple systems in place to prepare for, detect and respond to, and prevent the spread of novel coronavirus and effective infection prevention and control measures are in place across Ontario's health system.

As with any germs that cause respiratory illnesses, there are things you can do to help prevent the spread of those. Take these everyday steps to reduce exposure to the virus and protect your health:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water
- Sneeze and cough into your sleeve
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth
- Avoid contact with people who are sick

For those patients who have had a positive symptom screening and have had recent travel to an impacted area, or have come into contact with people with that travel history, the Ministry of Health has recommended the use of routine practices and additional precautions (contact + droplet + airborne) for patient care. These precautions include:

- Usage of gloves, gowns, fit tested N95 Respirator and appropriate eye protection
- Removal of PPE immediately upon exit from a patient room and disposed of in a waste container at the exit
- Performance of hand hygiene to appropriately doff PPE without self contamination; hand hygiene must be performed following the removal of all PPE
- Airborne infection isolation rooms must be used when possible

Employees are responsible for ensuring that their mask fit testing is up-to-date and for knowing their N95 mask fit number. If you need a mask fit test, please contact Occupational Health at extension 7202.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Infection Prevention and Control at extension 7106 or Occupational Health and Safety at extension 7202.

Should we be given an indication from our community Health partners that the risk level has changed, we will be advising our staff and community members, immediately.

Thank you

Sources of Information:

<https://www.ontario.ca/page/2019-novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov>

http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/publichealth/coronavirus/2019_guidance.aspx

<https://www.oha.com/news/updates-on-the-novel-coronavirus>