

Novel coronavirus (COVID-19):

Weekly Bulletin to First Nations in Alberta: February 20, 2020

Office of the Senior Medical Officer of Health

Status Update

Confirmed cases reported, as of February 19, 2020:

	Alberta (Alberta Health)	Canada (Public Health Agency of Canada)	Globally (World Health Organization)
Cases	0	8 (ON = 3, BC = 5)	75,204
Deaths	-	0	2,009

- A pneumonia outbreak, now known to be caused by a novel (new) coronavirus, was identified in Wuhan, China on December 31, 2019. The World Health Organization (WHO) has declared the virus a public health emergency.
- **There are no confirmed or probable cases in Alberta.** Eight confirmed or probable cases have been announced in Canada.
- The current overall risk to Albertans is still considered low by medical experts. Cases are being reported in many provinces in China and other parts of the world. At this time, higher risk applies to people who develop a fever and/or a cough or shortness of breath **AND** meet any of the below criteria:
 - Travelled to mainland China in the 14 days before illness onset;
OR
 - Had close contact* with a confirmed or probable case of COVID-19 within 14 days before illness onset;
OR
 - Had close contact* with a person with acute respiratory illness who was in mainland China within 14 days before their illness onset;
OR
 - Had laboratory exposure to biological material (e.g. primary clinical specimens, virus culture isolates) known to contain COVID-19 virus within 14 days before illness onset.

* **A close contact** is defined as a person who provided care for the individual, including healthcare workers, family members or other caregivers, or who had other similar close physical contact with the person without consistent and appropriate use of personal protective equipment OR who lived with or otherwise had close prolonged contact (within 2 metres) with the person while they were infectious OR had direct contact with infectious bodily fluids of the person (e.g. was coughed or sneezed on) while not wearing recommended personal protective equipment.

Source: Alberta Health Services (Retrieved from <https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/topics/Page16944.aspx> February 20, 2020)



COVID-19

- Symptoms for COVID-19 infection are similar to those of influenza or other respiratory illnesses. They can range from mild to severe and include fever, cough, and shortness of breath. The table below shows the characteristics of COVID-19 compared to other major viruses.

Virus	Total # reported cases	Deaths reported	Crude fatality ratio	Countries affected /reporting
Seasonal influenza (1)	3-5 million (severe cases)	290,000-650,000	0.1%	Global
Ebola 2014	28,600	11,325	50% (average)	6 countries
H5N1 Bird Flu (human infections)	861	455	53%	17 countries
Nipah	265	105	40-75%	4 countries
SARS	8098	774	9.5%	26 countries
MERS (2)	2494	858	35%	27 countries
H7N9 Bird Flu (3)	1568	At least 615	39%	3 countries
COVID-19 (4)	75,204	2,009	2.7%*	26 countries

Adapted from World Health Organization

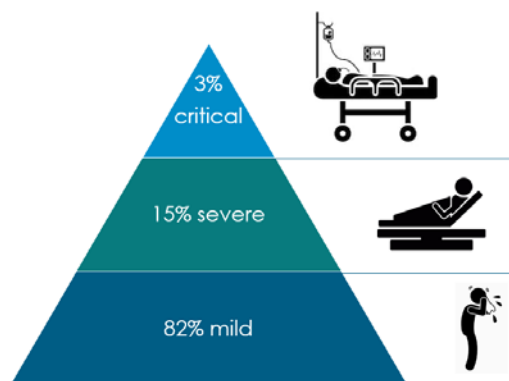
^[1] Global burden estimates of annual epidemics

^[2] Data from 2012 till November 2019

^[3] Data from 2013 till September 2018

^[4] Data as of 19 February 2020

- *The COVID-19 crude fatality ratio (CFR) does not include mild infections that may be missed from current surveillance. The CFR is expected to change as more information about the virus becomes available.
- While COVID-19 can cause serious illness, many patients have reported only mild symptoms. The figure below displays China National Health Commission estimates of clinical severity (based on information from 17,185 cases).



Source: China NHC

- There is evidence of **person-to-person spread**. COVID-19 is believed to be spread mainly by coughing, sneezing or direct contact with a sick person or with surfaces they have **recently** touched. There is no evidence that it's capable of being transmitted by imported goods.

Current Public Health Actions

Alberta's public health officials are carefully monitoring the situation in Canada, China and around the world, and are ready to respond should there be any cases in Alberta. They are:

- working closely with federal, provincial and territorial partners to share information and assess potential health risks.
- ensuring our health system is ready to respond effectively if needed.
- ensuring front-line health professionals have information about the virus so they can take recommended actions and promptly report suspected cases to public health officials.

Although travel-related cases may be identified in the future, the risk for Albertans is still considered low. Public health measures are in place to quickly identify potential cases and prevent the infection from spreading.

Actions First Nation communities are encouraged to take

- Update and inform your community members of the evolving situation.
- Review and update the pandemic annex of your All-Hazards Emergency Response Plan.
- Be aware of current public health measures.
- Educate community members on the steps they can take to protect themselves against respiratory illnesses (below).

Actions individuals and families can take

To help protect against all respiratory illnesses, including the flu and COVID-19, you should:

- Wash your hands often and well.
- Avoid touching your face, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Clean and disinfect surfaces that are frequently touched.
- Stay at home and away from others if you are feeling ill.
- When sick, cover your cough and sneezes and then wash your hands.

Wearing Medical Masks

- If you are healthy, medical masks are not recommended.
- When sick, wearing a mask helps prevent illnesses from being passed on to other people. This is why people who have a cough or respiratory symptoms are asked to wear a mask and wash their hands when visiting the clinic.

Upcoming events

- In-person, train-the trainer, Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) sessions will occur in six locations around the province during the first two weeks of March. Community Health Nurses (2-3 from each community) will receive a review of COVID-19 IPC and PPE practices. Nurses who attend the training can then train others in the community.

Date	Audience	Training Location
Monday, March 2	Edmonton area nurses	Maskwacis
Wednesday, March 4	Fort McMurray area nurses	Fort McMurray
Thursday, March 5	Slave Lake area nurses	Slave Lake
Monday, March 9	High Level area nurses	High Level
Wednesday, March 11	Calgary area nurses	High River
Thursday, March 12	Lakeland area nurses	St. Paul

*A registration form with training details will be sent out to the nurses by email.

Updates and additional information

For current information on novel coronavirus (COVID-19), refer to the following websites, which are being regularly maintained and updated.

Alberta Health – [Coronavirus info for Albertans](#)

<https://www.alberta.ca/coronavirus-info-for-albertans.aspx>

Alberta Health Services – [novel coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)

<https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/topics/Page16944.aspx>

Public Health Agency of Canada – [2019 novel coronavirus: Outbreak update](#)

<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection.html>

World Health Organization – [Coronavirus disease \(COVID-19\) outbreak](#)

<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>

Johns Hopkins University Interactive Dashboard – [Coronavirus COVID-19 Global Cases](#)

Previous information bulletins and additional information and resources for health staff can be found at [OneHealth.ca](#)

Anyone with specific questions or concerns about their health is encouraged to call Health Link at 811 for assessment and health advice.

This Bulletin was prepared by the Office of the Senior Medical Officer of Health, Alberta Region. Should you have questions about this document, please do not hesitate to email: sac.cdemergenciesab-urgencesmtab.isc@canada.ca