

IMPORTANT CORONAVIRUS UPDATE

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A MESSAGE FROM YOUR MP

Over the past number of weeks, we have all heard about the spread of the COVID-19 virus around the world. The virus has been a topic of great discussion in Parliament, and all MPs have been briefed on the situation at hand.

Here in Alberta, the government has been coordinating with local health agencies to ensure they are prepared for cases that may arrive at their doors, and that includes here in southern Alberta.

As this situation develops, I would ask that everyone take the time to read this information on the virus and follow the guidance of all levels of government so we can ensure the safety of all our friends and family.



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KNOW THE FACTS ABOUT CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)

COVID-19 is an illness caused by a coronavirus. Human coronaviruses are common and are typically associated with mild illnesses, similar to the common cold.

Symptoms of human coronaviruses may be very mild or more serious, such as:



FEVER



COUGH



DIFFICULTY BREATHING

Symptoms may take up to 14 days to appear after exposure to the virus. Coronaviruses are most commonly spread from an infected person through:

- Respiratory droplets when you cough or sneeze.
- Close personal contact, such as touching or shaking hands.
- Touching something with the virus on it, then touching your eyes, nose or mouth before washing your hands.

These viruses are not known to spread through ventilation systems or through water.

The best way to prevent the spread of infections is to:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds;
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth, especially with unwashed hands;
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick;
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick;
- When coughing or sneezing:
 - Cover you mouth and nose with your arm or tissues to reduce the spread of germs.
 - Immediately dispose of any tissues you have used into the garbage as soon as possible and wash your hands afterwards.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces, such as toys, electronic devices and doorknobs.
- Stay home if you are sick to avoid spreading illness to others.

If you have symptoms of COVID-19—fever, cough, or difficult breathing:

- Stay home to avoid spreading it to others.
- If you live with others, stay in a separate room or keep a two-meter distance.
- Call ahead before you visit a health care professional or call you local public health authority.
- Tell them your symptoms and follow their instructions.
- If you need immediate medical attention, call 911 and tell them your symptoms.

BE PREPARED, PLAN AHEAD

Canada's health system is ready to respond to cases that arise in Canada, but it is important that individuals and communities are ready if there is widespread illness here at home.

Take time to consider what you will do if you or a family member becomes sick and needs care. Think about:

- What food and household supplies you need for you and your family.
- What medicines you need, including renewing and refilling prescriptions ahead of time.
- Discuss your plans with your family, friends and neighbours, and set up a system to check in on each other by phone, email or text during times of need.

Have supplies on hand so you do not need to leave your home if you become ill. Avoid panic buying, add a few extra items to your grocery cart every time you shop. This places less of a burden on suppliers, and can help ease financial burden on you as well.

Stock up on:

- Dried pasta and rice
- Pasta sauces
- Canned soups, vegetables and beans
- Pet food and supplies
- See list on pg. 11 for other useful household items



There are simple, practical things you can do to prepare in case you or someone in your household becomes ill or if COVID-19 becomes common in your community.

Make a plan that includes:

- Essential supplies (a few weeks' worth) on hand so you will not need to leave your home if you become ill.
- Avoid panic buying. Add a few extra items to your cart every time you shop. This places less of a burden on suppliers, and can help ease financial burden on you as well.
- Renew and refill your prescription medications.

Alternative arrangements in case you become ill or if you need to care for a sick family member. For example:

- Have backup childcare in case you or your usual care provider become ill. If you care for dependents, have a backup caregiver in place.
- Talk to your employer about working from home if possible.

Reducing your exposure to crowded places if COVID-19 becomes common in your community. For example:

- Shop and use public transit during off-peak hours.
- Exercise outdoors instead of in an indoor fitness club.

Communicate

- Share your plan with your family, friends and neighbours.
- Set up a buddy system to check in on each other by phone, email or text during times of need.

Stay Informed

- Learn about the symptoms of COVID-19, how it spreads and how to prevent illness.
- Get your information from reliable sources such as the Public Health Agency of Canada, and provincial, territorial and municipal public health authorities.
- If the news media is making you feel anxious, take a break from it.

VULNERABLE POPULATIONS AND COVID-19



While diseases can make anyone sick, some Canadians are more at risk of getting an infection and developing severe complications due to their health, social and economic circumstances.

Vulnerable populations may include:

Anyone who is:

- An older adult.
- At risk due to underlying medical conditions (e.g. heart disease, hypertension, diabetes, chronic respiratory diseases, diabetes, cancer).
- At risk due to a compromised immune system from a medical condition or treatment (e.g. chemotherapy).

Anyone who has:

- Difficulty reading, speaking, understanding or communicating.
- Difficulty accessing medical care or health advice.
- Difficulty doing preventive activities, like frequent hand washing and covering coughs and sneezes.
- Ongoing specialized medical care or needs specific medical supplies.
- Ongoing supervision needs or support for maintaining independence.
- Unstable employment or inflexible working conditions.
- Social or geographic isolation, like in remote and isolated communities.
- Insecure, inadequate, or nonexistent housing conditions.

HOW YOUR ORGANIZATION/BUSINESS CAN SUPPORT VULNERABLE POPULATIONS

Provide clear instructions about how to wash hands and cover coughs using:

- The most commonly used language in the community.
- Short messages that explain simple steps they can take.
- Large font and graphics.
- Accessible instructions (e.g., braille, pictorial).
- By posting signs in common areas near sinks, entrances, intake areas, restrooms, sleeping areas, recreation areas, waiting rooms.

Consider supporting alternatives such as:

- using volunteer drivers and subsidized taxi fares instead of public transportation.
- putting in place alternative outreach measures or a “buddy” system.
- including policies to allow sick clients to rest in shelters during the day.
- providing access to food, drinks and supplies, as possible.
- reminding clients to fill or refill prescriptions, and necessary medical supplies.

If you suspect a client is sick from COVID-19, please contact your local public health authority.

HOW TO ISOLATE AT HOME WHEN YOU HAVE COVID-19

Isolation means staying at home when you are sick with COVID-19 and avoiding contact with other people to help prevent the spread of disease to others in your home and your community.

If you have been diagnosed with COVID-19, it is expected that you take the following measures.

Limit contact with others

- Do not leave home unless absolutely necessary, such as to seek medical care.
- Do not go to school, work, other public areas or use public transportation (e.g. buses, taxis).
- Stay in a separate room and use a separate bathroom from others in your home, if possible.
- If you have to be in contact with others, keep at least 2 meters between yourself and the other person.
- Keep interactions brief and wear a mask.
- Avoid contact with individuals with chronic conditions, compromised immune systems and older adults.
- Avoid contact with pets if you live with other people that may also be touching the pet.

Care for yourself

- Monitor your symptoms as directed by your healthcare provider or Public Health Authority.
- If your symptoms get worse, immediately contact your healthcare provider or Public Health Authority and follow their instructions.
- Get some rest, eat a balanced diet, and stay in touch with others through 'communication devices'.

SUPPLIES TO HAVE AT HOME WHEN ISOLATING

- ◇ Surgical/procedure masks (do not re-use)
- ◇ Eye protection
- ◇ Disposable gloves (do not re-use)
- ◇ Disposable paper towels
- ◇ Tissues
- ◇ Waste container with plastic liner
- ◇ Thermometer
- ◇ Over the counter medication to reduce fever (e.g. ibuprofen or acetaminophen)
- ◇ Running water
- ◇ Hand soap
- ◇ Alcohol-based sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol
- ◇ Dish soap
- ◇ Regular laundry soap
- ◇ Regular household cleaning products
- ◇ Bleach (5% sodium hypochlorite) and a separate container for dilution (one part bleach to nine parts water)
- ◇ Alcohol prep wipes
- ◇ Arrange to have your groceries delivered to you

HOW TO CARE FOR A PERSON WITH COVID-19 AT HOME: ADVICE FOR CAREGIVERS

Limit contact

- Only one healthy person should provide care.
- Do not share personal items with the ill person, such as toothbrushes, towels, bed linen, utensils or electronic devices.
- Use a separate bathroom from the ill person if possible.

Keeping your Environment Clean

- Place used masks, gloves and other contaminated items in a lined container, and dispose of them.
- Place possibly contaminated laundry into a container with a plastic liner and do not shake. Wash with regular laundry soap and hot water. Clothing and linens belonging to the ill person can be washed with other laundry.
- At least once daily, use

household disinfectants or diluted bleach (one part bleach and 9 parts water) to clean and disinfect surfaces that people touch often.

Protect yourself

- If possible, vulnerable persons should not care for someone with COVID-19. See pg. 6.
- If you need to be within 2 meters of the ill person, wear a mask, disposable gloves and eye protection.
- Wear disposable gloves when touching the ill person.
- Throw away used masks or gloves.
- Clean your hands often for at least 20 seconds, dry your hands with disposable paper towels.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.

TRAVELERS RETURNING TO CANADA

While abroad, you may have come in contact with the novel coronavirus. For the next 14 days, the Public Health Agency of Canada asks that you:

- Monitor your health for fever, cough and difficulty breathing; and,
- Avoid places where you cannot easily separate yourself from others if you become ill.

To further protect those around you, wash your hands often and cover your mouth and nose with your arm when coughing or sneezing.

If you start having symptoms of COVID-19, isolate yourself from others as quickly as possible. Immediately call a health care professional or the public health authority in the province or territory where you are located. Describe your symptoms and travel history. They will provide advice on what you should do.

KEEP CALM BE PREPARED

What Should I Do If I Think I Have COVID-19?

If you have symptoms such as fever, cough and difficulty breathing and have travelled outside Canada or have been exposed to someone who has COVID-19, stay home and call Health Link 811. If you are not seriously ill, **do not** go to a physician's office, a health care facility or a lab without consulting with Health Link 811 first. Call 911 if you are seriously ill and need immediate medical attention and inform them that you may have COVID-19.



GENERAL INFORMATION

www.canada.ca/coronavirus

Coronavirus Hotline: 1-833-784-4397

LOCAL PUBLIC HEALTH AUTHORITIES



MEDICINE HAT COMMUNITY HEALTH SERVICES

403-502-8200
2948 Dunmore Road SE
Medicine Hat, AB



MILK RIVER HEALTH CENTRE

403-647-3500
517 Centre Avenue, Milk River, AB



COALDALE HEALTH CENTRE

403-345-3075
2100 11 Street, Coaldale, AB



TABER HEALTH CENTRE

403-223-7211
4326 50 Avenue, Taber



PROVINCE OF ALBERTA PUBLIC HEALTH AUTHORITY

811

YOUR VOICE IN OTTAWA

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