

Public Health
277 Victoria Street
5th Floor
Toronto, Ontario M5B 1W2

toronto.ca/health

February 24, 2020

Dear School Administrators:

Re: Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)

I am writing to provide you with an update about COVID-19, the disease caused by the novel coronavirus, and Toronto Public Health's response.

At this time, the risk of getting COVID-19 remains low in Toronto because the virus is not spreading in our community. To date, there have been three confirmed cases of this disease in Toronto, all three of these individuals had a history of travel in the Chinese province of Hubei, the epicentre of the current outbreak. Two of the three people have since recovered from their illness, and the other is recovering at home in self-isolation. Globally, most people have gotten this virus through travel in affected areas or through close or household contact with someone who had the virus.

Toronto Public Health continues to actively monitor this situation in collaboration with our provincial and national health colleagues, and local hospitals, airports, and health partners. The Ontario Minister of Health has made COVID-19 reportable to public health. If a potential case is identified in Toronto, they will be promptly reported to the Medical Officer of Health, and the person will receive directions on where medical assessment and testing can be carried out appropriately.

Under the guidance of the Public Health Agency of Canada, people returning to Toronto from areas of the world where the virus is spreading are receiving detailed information at airports of entry on preventative actions they need to take. Anyone who has travelled to Toronto from Hubei province is being asked to limit contact with others for 14 days from the date they left Hubei. This means to self-isolate and stay at home. They are also being advised to contact Toronto Public Health at 416-338-7600.

We appreciate that in the days ahead you may have staff and students returning to school after a period of self-isolation or quarantine. Toronto residents who have returned from travel to Hubei province and were asked to self-isolate for 14 days are being monitored by Toronto Public Health during their period of isolation. Once they have completed their period of isolation, they will be provided with a letter from Toronto Public Health indicating that it is safe for them to return to their regular activities, such as school or work. People who have been placed in quarantine, such as those at Canadian Forces Base Trenton, will receive a letter when their period of quarantine has ended.

We continue to advise members of the public to take the usual prevention measures to reduce the risk of transmission of the flu and respiratory illness, including:

- wash your hands frequently and thoroughly with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer;
- cover your mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze;
- if you don't have a tissue, sneeze or cough into your sleeve or arm;
- get an annual flu vaccination, available from clinics and pharmacies; and
- stay home if you are ill.

As this is an evolving situation, we want to remind people of the importance of using credible information sources to stay informed, and to encourage others to do the same. We are updating our website frequently, as new information is confirmed. For more information, please visit www.toronto.ca/coronavirus.

You can also call Toronto Public Health at 416-338-7600, Monday to Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 8:00 p.m., and on weekends from 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Translation is available in many languages.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Eileen". The signature is fluid and cursive, written in a professional style.

Dr. Eileen de Villa
Medical Officer of Health