



EVERGREEN KEY MESSAGES

2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) – Wuhan, China

Issue Statement: On December 31, 2019, the Wuhan Municipal Health Commission in Hubei province, Central China, issued a public statement that they had identified an outbreak of pneumonia of unknown cause. China has made a determination that a novel coronavirus (referred to as COVID-19) is responsible for cases of pneumonia in the Wuhan outbreak.

For the latest and most up-to-date information about COVID-19, including the latest number of confirmed cases, visit Canada.ca/coronavirus.

These media lines have been prepared for use by media relations and senior officials to respond to requests for information.

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COVID-19 key messages

- Our top priority is the health and safety of Canadians.
- On March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) assessed COVID-19 as a pandemic.
- The assessment by the WHO is not unexpected.
- In Canada, our health system is prepared for such a situation.
- Canada has multiple systems activated and in place to prepare for, prevent, detect, and respond to the spread of novel coronavirus. These include the following:
 - The Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) activated the Health Portfolio Operations Centre (HPOC) to ensure effective planning and coordination of the Agency's response efforts, in collaboration with international and federal, provincial and territorial partners.
 - Public Safety Canada has activated the Government of Canada Operations Centre to coordinate activities across federal departments and agencies.
 - PHAC, through Canada's Chief Public Health Officer, is in close contact with provincial and territorial Chief Medical Officers of Health to share information, coordinate response efforts, and support informed vigilance as the situation evolves.
 - A Special Advisory Committee of Canada's Chief Medical Officers of Health and senior public health officials has been activated to focus on coordination of federal, provincial and territorial preparedness and response across Canada's health systems.
 - Routine traveller screening procedures are in place at all of Canada's ports of entry, and additional border screening measures have been expanded to all international airports in Canada to help identify any travellers returning to Canada who may be ill, and to raise awareness among travellers about what they should do if they become sick.
- The Government of Canada maintains continual preparedness for public health emergencies, taking precautions to mitigate the potential risk of introduction and spread of infectious diseases. These precautions include:
 - a comprehensive surveillance infrastructure to rapidly identify emerging events and infectious diseases, including respiratory illnesses;
 - routine infection prevention and control precautions in all Canadian hospitals; and
 - public health laboratory capacity that is well equipped to rapidly detect serious infectious diseases.
- It is a critical time with global efforts focused on containment of the outbreak and the prevention of further spread.
- Everyone has to contribute to flattening the epidemic curve. We have to modify our behaviours including personal hygiene measures, like frequent hand-washing, covering our coughs, and practicing physical distancing.
- This is an evolving situation, and we will provide Canadians with new information as it becomes available.

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- For the latest and most up-to-date information, visit canada.ca/coronavirus or call the new toll-free phone line (1-833-784-4397) to get answers to questions about the 2019 novel coronavirus.

Risks to Canadians

- COVID-19 is a serious health threat, and the situation is evolving daily.
- The risk will vary between and within communities, but given the increasing number of cases in Canada, the risk to Canadians is considered **high**.
- This does not mean that all Canadians will get the disease.
- It means that there is a significant impact on the health care system already that could impact health care resources available to Canadians with or without COVID-19, if we do not flatten the epidemic curve now.
- The risk of severe illness and outcomes is higher for older adults and those of all ages with underlying medical conditions.
- This is why we are advising Canadians to stay home, if possible. If you must leave your home, practise physical distancing.
- Public health authorities across the country are working hard to slow the spread of COVID-19 in our communities and to reduce its impact.
- The Public Health Agency of Canada, along with provincial, territorial and community partners, continues to reassess the public health risk, based on the best available evidence as the situation evolves.

Foundations for Living with COVID-19

- We recognize that we will continue to see the transmission of COVID-19 in the community as things start opening up again. That is why we need to move slowly, cautiously, as we live through the next phases of this pandemic, until such time as we have a vaccine.
- Most people infected with COVID experience mild symptoms. During this reopening phase, we will do our utmost to protect those at most risk of severe illness due the virus. Our goal is to minimize overall illness and death from COVID and non COVID related illnesses. There are key steps all Canadians can take in this.
- Continue to practice the critical measures to limit transmission: physical distancing, frequent hand-washing, and staying home if you're sick.
- If you suspect you have illness due to COVID, get tested. This will help us identify any outbreaks in the community and put in place measures to prevent further spread.
- By opening up health services for all conditions again, and allowing for some social and economic activity, we hope to reduce the overall burden of disease and illness in the community, COVID and non-COVID related.

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- People with chronic disease, people over the age of 60 and anyone at higher risk should maintain a high-level of vigilance. We need to support these most-vulnerable members of the community to continue to stay home as much as possible, avoid situations where non-home contacts might be and/or where adequate physical distancing is not possible.
- Remember that each of us can still infect others, even if we have no symptoms. It will be critical to continue practicing fundamental infection prevention measures, as well as to ensure that anyone with symptoms contacts goes to a testing centre right away.
- If you are experiencing even mild symptoms, stay home from work and other community settings until you are better. Employers and employees alike need to support each other on this front so that we can track the rate of transmission and keep it under control. Remember that the science tells us it's possible to be spreading the virus before, during and even without any symptoms.
- We know many Canadians want to mark important ceremonies, funerals and other important rites and rituals. It will be important to follow your local guidance on number of participants, infection prevention measures

Keeping Canadians Informed

COVID-19 Situational Dashboard

- On April 4, the Government of Canada launched a new COVID-19 situational dashboard for Canada.
- The situation in Canada is changing rapidly and we are learning more about COVID-19 every day. Canadians need easy access to digital tools and resources to help them get the information they need about COVID-19.
- This dashboard provides Canadians and researchers with the latest COVID-19 data in a user-friendly format online so that they can better understand how the outbreak of COVID-19 is evolving in Canada.
- It provides an interactive overview of number of cases and deaths in Canada, including information on affected populations by age, sex and on how the outbreak is progressing over time.
- This tool does not provide any modelling or forecasting of what may occur in the coming weeks and months.
- New data is released daily by provincial and territorial officials. While the dashboard is continuously updated to reflect these new data, if there are any differences between the national case count and testing numbers reported by provincial and territorial public health officials, the provincial and territorial data should be considered the most up-to-date.
- The Government of Canada will continue to work collaboratively with partners at all levels of government to respond to COVID-19 and ensure that cases continue to be rapidly identified and managed in order to protect the health of Canadians.

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Virtual Health Tools

- More than ever, Canadians need to have tools and resources to support their health and wellbeing, including readily available information, mental health supports, alerts, and screening tools.
- May 3rd's announcement of \$240.5 million will help Canadians access credible health information and needed health services through virtual tools and approaches.
- Virtual tools enable Canadians to engage safely with their regular health providers via phone, text or video-conference. They also enable patients to continue to access specialist services during this time of uncertainty.
- Improving access to virtual tools will also help Canadians to access trustworthy information, including via the Canada COVID-19 mobile app, so that they can understand and track their symptoms and learn more about how to stay safe during the pandemic.
- We recognize that Canadians are coping with the effects of COVID-19 and are facing different degrees of stress. This investment will support Wellness Together Canada, a new free online portal that offers virtual mental health, wellbeing and substance use supports.
- The Government of Canada is working closely with provinces and territories, innovators and others to support rapid expansion of virtual care services and make these tools widely available to Canadians and their families.
- Supporting the expansion of virtual care and providing digital solutions to Canadians will help reduce pressures on health systems and provide Canadians with needed health services and authoritative information in a safe and secure manner.
- Our government recognizes that this is an unprecedented time. We are continuing to work with provinces and territories, innovators and others to take action and support Canadians.
- Enabling Canadians to access credible information and needed health services virtually and securely is key to the government's work to keep Canadians safe and informed.

Canada COVID-19 app

- Canadians need easy access to digital tools and resources to help them get the information they need about COVID-19.
- The Canada COVID-19 mobile application allows users to access trusted health resources and track COVID-19 symptoms daily.
- The latest updates about COVID-19 and how Canada is responding are available in real-time through the app with recommendations and resources that are personalized.

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- This app builds on what provinces and territories are doing and provides another valuable resource for Canadians.
- Health Canada is continuing to work closely with provinces and territories, vendors and stakeholders to make additional tools widely available to Canadians and their families.
- The Canada COVID-19 app is a central resource to be used for accessing trusted, evidence-based information about the COVID-19 pandemic across Canada. It does not track personal information, nor is it a surveillance tool.
- The protection of Canadians information is a priority for the Government of Canada and any tool used to collect health care information would need to undergo a rigorous privacy assessment.

Federal funding

- On March 11, the Prime Minister, Justin Trudeau, announced Canada's more than \$1- billion whole-of-government COVID-19 Response Fund.
- Funding provided to PHAC and Health Canada includes:
 - \$50 million for the Public Health Agency of Canada to support ongoing communications to keep Canadians informed and a national public education campaign to encourage the adoption of personal protective behaviours.
 - \$100 million to support federal public health measures such as enhanced surveillance, increased testing at the National Microbiology Laboratory (NML) and ongoing support for preparedness in First Nations and Inuit communities.
 - This is in addition to an initial \$50 million that was provided to support the immediate public health response.
 - \$275 million to enhance our capacity to explore antivirals, develop vaccines and support clinical trials.
 - This is in addition to the \$27 million for coronavirus research announced in early March through the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, which will support 47 research teams from across Canada.
- \$50 million to the Public Health Agency of Canada to support the purchase of personal protective equipment—such as surgical masks, face shields and gowns—and medical supplies to address federal needs and supplement stocks of the provinces and territories that require it.

Government of Canada's Research Response to COVID-19

- Our top priority is the health and safety of Canadians.
- Canada is home to some of the most skilled and recognized researchers in the world, who are working hard to support international efforts to fight this pandemic.

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- Every day, we are adding to our knowledge of COVID-19, keeping pace with the rapid growth of new scientific evidence as it emerges.
- In order to slow, and eventually stop, the spread of COVID-19 infection we need to mobilize Canada's research and scientific communities to advance research and technology development.
- That's why, in March 2020, the Government of Canada announced a \$1 billion government-wide COVID-19 Response Fund, which includes \$275 million to enhance our capacity to test antivirals, develop vaccines and support clinical trials.
- Through the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) Rapid Research Response program, the Government of Canada has invested a total of \$54.2 million to support 99 research teams from across the country. These teams are focusing on developing and implementing measures to rapidly detect, manage and reduce the transmission of COVID-19. This includes research into a vaccine, as well as the development of strategies to combat stigma, misinformation and fear.
- In addition to CIHR, funding for the Rapid Research Response was provided by the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada, the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, the Canada Research Coordinating Committee, the International Development Research Centre, Genome Canada, as well as contributions from Research Manitoba, Research Nova Scotia and Alberta Innovates.
- The report released today highlights the critical and innovative research taking place across Canada, including tools and solutions being developed to combat and treat COVID-19.
- This includes leveraging capacity and expertise from the Government of Canada's research facilities and making strategic investments to support and boost Canadian research capacity in both academia and industry.
- Many of these funded projects have international collaborations and partnerships with academia, government departments as well as industry.
- Together, we are working to turn significant findings and research into actions that will save lives across the country.

Examples of projects

- The Government of Canada is investing \$150 million to support federal public health measures such as enhanced surveillance, increased testing at the Public Health Agency of Canada's (PHAC) National Microbiology Laboratory and ongoing support for preparedness in First Nations and Inuit communities.
- This important work will support diagnostic testing across Canada, research, testing and implementation of new diagnostic tests and methods, and coordination of the supply and distribution of reagents and lab supplies with provincial and territorial authorities to increase testing capacity across the country.
- The Public Health Agency of Canada's National Microbiology Laboratory is improving its understanding of the epidemiology of COVID-19 across Canada, which will help us to improve our response. Part of this work includes evaluating and establishing blood test methods to determine the immune status of Canadian populations and modelling work to

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assess different projections that will inform the actions we need to take to minimize the impact of the virus.

- The National Research Council of Canada's (NRC) Pandemic Response Challenge Program will bring together the best Canadian researchers from government, academia, and the private sector to develop important medical countermeasures to address COVID-19. Working with Canada's health experts to identify the most pressing needs, the program will target tools to rapidly diagnose and detect the virus, drugs and vaccines to treat and prevent the illness, and digital health solutions to help manage Canada's response to the pandemic.

Collaborative work to develop a vaccine:

- Currently, there is no vaccine to protect against COVID-19. Research supporting the development of COVID-19 vaccines is in various stages around the world, including in Canada.
- We are taking appropriate action to secure the availability of a vaccine or drug to prevent or treat COVID-19 to Canadians, once it is developed.
- This includes investments to:
 - Medicago (Quebec City): for pre-clinical and clinical testing of a plant-based, virus-like particle vaccine, with expansion of manufacturing capacity;
 - The University of Saskatchewan's Vaccine and Infectious Disease Organization – International Vaccine Centre's (VIDO-InterVac): to strengthen VIDO-InterVac's existing expertise on coronavirus research and upgrade its manufacturing facility to meet good manufacturing practice (GMP) standards; to support this effort, the NML and the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) are collaborating with the University of Saskatchewan's VIDO-InterVac and with the National Research Council to develop and test vaccine candidates against COVID-19; and,
 - National Research Council (NRC): to upgrade the Human Health Therapeutics Research Centre in Montreal to meet GMP standards. This biomanufacturing facility will be available to produce clinical trial lots as soon as vaccine candidates become available, beginning as early as late spring 2020.
- Health Canada is also working with vaccine developers and manufacturers to help expedite the assessment of vaccines to prevent COVID-19. This includes supporting clinical trials and preparing for expedited reviews, once they are developed.
- The Government of Canada will continue working with international health product regulators—including the European Medicines Agency, the United States Food and Drug Administration, Australia, Canada, Singapore and Switzerland partners, and other organizations such as the International Coalition of Medicines Regulatory Authorities and the World Health Organization (WHO)—to support and coordinate rapid regulatory responses for potential vaccines and other medical countermeasures.
- The NRC is also working with a number of companies in the development of vaccine candidates.
- Canada is participating in the SOLIDARITY trial—a multinational trial coordinated by the WHO that is testing multiple potential drugs for the fight against COVID-19. The Canadian

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arm of this study has already begun enrolling patients. This global trial plans to recruit up to 20 sites across Canada.

- This unprecedented mega-trial to test potential treatments for COVID-19 is truly a new model for global collaboration, with the goal of being able to quickly identify treatments that could reduce the toll of COVID-19.

Working with industry to advance research and bring innovative products to market

- The Government of Canada is also working with industry to support research and manufacturing capabilities through Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada and the National Research Council of Canada.
- This includes funding to develop patient monitoring systems and home diagnostic kits.
- The Government of Canada is also providing funding to help Canadian small and medium-sized businesses to increase their capacity to innovate and take ideas to market, including manufacturing personal protective equipment and sanitation products.

Collaboration with the global research community

- The Government of Canada is also connected to the global research effort to respond to COVID-19, working with international partners, including the WHO through its Collaborating Centres and Blueprint R&D Initiative, to coordinate efforts and share research data and findings to collectively build knowledge around the world.
- Some examples include collaboration between the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA), Defence Research and Development Canada (DRDC) and PHAC to establish the Biosafety Level 4 Zoonotic Disease Network (BSL4ZNet).
- This network consists of 15 government organizations from five countries (Canada, the US, the UK, Germany and Australia), each with a responsibility over the regulation of human, animal and zoonotic pathogens with pandemic potential.
- The BSL4Znet has been conducting COVID-19 emergency meetings since early January with international partners to facilitate the sharing of scientific information and research capacity needs to enhance global efforts to respond to the spread of COVID-19.
- PHAC and DRDC are also members of the Medical Countermeasures Consortium, in partnership with the Department of National Defence, where they engage with the US, the UK and Australian governments to promote collaboration in research, development and acquisition.
- GAC, NRC, PHAC and CFIA regularly engage with the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness and Innovation (CEPI), which is a key international funding mechanism for vaccine development. Canada has provided \$54 million to CEPI, which is leading efforts to have COVID-19 vaccine candidates ready for clinical trials by late spring 2020.
- CIHR's response to the COVID-19 pandemic is being informed by international partners, including the WHO and the Global Research Collaboration for Infectious Disease Preparedness (Glo-PID-R).

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- CIHR, in partnership with PHAC, is leveraging the existing Canadian Immunization Research Network (CIRN) to address the COVID-19 pandemic. CIRN has received \$1 million through a direct grant to gather data related to COVID-19 symptoms, as well as possible treatments and risk factors, which will inform Canada's public health response to COVID-19.
- Health Canada is engaged with other international regulators to monitor any impacts on global supply as a member of the International Pharmaceutical Regulators Programme.

Mental Health Support for Canadians

Wellness Together Canada portal

- Canadians need easy access to digital tools and resources to provide them with the information they need during COVID-19.
- During these difficult times, it is critical that Canadians have access to effective tools to support their mental health and wellbeing, obtain credible and reliable information about mental health and substance use, and access services.
- That's why the Government of Canada is launched the Wellness Together Canada mental health and substance use support portal. It is a central resource for accessing confidential mental health and substance use support with respect to COVID-19.
- Health Canada was pleased to work with a wide variety of organizations who have a long history of providing top quality mental health and substance use care to Canadians, including Stepped Care Solutions, Kids Help Phone, Homewood Health, Greenspace Health, the Mental Health Commission of Canada, and the Canadian Psychological Association.
- This web-based portal provides Canadians with a virtual network of psycho-social information services and supports, and is available on Canada.ca/coronavirus and the Canada COVID-19 app.
- The Wellness Together Canada mental health and substance use support portal is meant to support existing provincial and territorial services.
- Health Canada is working closely with provinces and territories, vendors and stakeholders to make additional tools widely available to Canadians and their families.

Funding to Kids Help Phone to meet increased demand for mental health services for children and youth in relation to COVID-19

- The COVID-19 pandemic is new and unexpected. It is having a major impact on Canadians, including children and youth. Supporting the mental health and well-being of Canadians during the COVID-19 pandemic is a priority for the Government of Canada.
- With school closures and reduced access to community resources, Kids Help Phone is experiencing increased demand for its confidential 24/7 crises support services, which are available online, by telephone, and through text messaging.

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- In response, the Government of Canada is providing \$7.5 million to Kids Help Phone to meet this increased demand and provide young people with the mental health support they need during this difficult time.
- This additional support will provide English and French e-mental health services to children and youth across Canada who are feeling the social and financial impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. It will ensure that vulnerable Canadian youth and children can find the help they need when they need it most.
This investment is an important first step in connecting Canadians to the mental health resources they need across the country.

Vaccination Schedules during COVID-19

- Vaccination is one of the most effective ways to prevent the spread of infectious diseases.
- Although public health is a shared responsibility in Canada, matters related to vaccination programs fall under provincial and territorial jurisdiction.
- Canadians should contact their health care provider or public health authority to see whether there have been any revisions to their or their family's recommended vaccination schedule as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Given the current pandemic, it is normal to feel concerned about visiting a doctor's office or clinic for routine appointments such as vaccinations.
- Canadians should consult with their health care provider or public health authority to:
 - find out whether there have been any revisions to their or their family's; recommended vaccination schedule as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic
 - determine when they should visit, and;
 - learn about the measures that have been put in place to safely deliver vaccination services during COVID-19.
- Health care providers have precautions in place to prevent the spread of infection during office visits. These precautions can include:
 - screening patients for symptoms or other risk factors before the appointment and upon arrival;
 - posting signage at the office;
 - encouraging patients to use alcohol-based hand sanitizer;
 - providing masks to patients upon arrival; and
 - staggering appointments to ensure physical distancing in the office.

Infection Prevention and Control Guidance for Acute Health Care Settings

- Protecting Canada's healthcare workers from COVID-19 infection is essential. These care providers are at the frontline of the pandemic and are looking after some of the most vulnerable Canadians.

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- The Public Health Agency of Canada's (PHAC) infection prevention and control guidance complements provincial and territorial public health policies and procedures.
- PHAC's National Advisory Committee on Infection Prevention and Control, comprised of experts in this field and front-line care providers, worked with PHAC to develop this guidance.
- The F/P/T Special Advisory Committee on COVID-19 has endorsed the guidance and the technical brief.
- PHAC guidance is not mandatory. It should be read in conjunction with relevant provincial, territorial, and local legislation, regulations and policies.

Updated interim guidance on infection prevention and control in acute healthcare settings:

- This guidance was updated in line with our approach to keep guidance current and to ensure we provides comprehensive recommendations based on the best available evidence.
- The guidance emphasizes the need for environmental and administrative controls in facilities to protect healthcare workers and patients as well as the fundamental importance of training in the use of PPE.
- It indicates that droplet and contact precautions are appropriate for most patient care. Aerosol-generating medical procedures require N95 respirators along with other PPE.



- The guidance remains interim as it is subject to revision based on new scientific evidence.

New technical brief guidance regarding masks and eye protection/ face shields, to be worn throughout shifts:

- PHAC recommends that all health care workers in acute care hospitals wear medical masks and eye protection/face shields for the full duration of a shift in acute healthcare settings.
- This recommendation is based on emerging evidence of asymptomatic and pre-symptomatic transmission of COVID-19 infection.
- Wearing a medical mask throughout the duration of a shift is an important measure to help reduce the risk of transmission from a health care worker to a patient.
- Wearing a medical mask and eye protection/face shield throughout the duration of a shift is an important measure to help reduce the risk of transmission from a patient to a healthcare worker.
- This recommendation applies to health care workers who are in direct contact with patients, as well as environmental services staff working in patient care areas.
- Another important measure to ensure COVID stays out of health care settings is the recommendation that any health care workers who have COVID-19-related symptoms should immediately go home and only return to work following the advice of their local public health units
- Health care workers should refer to their province or territory's guidance, as well as facility policies on the use of masks, eye protection, and other personal protective equipment (PPE), including any PPE conservation strategies that are in place.

Canada's supply of PPE and medical supplies:

- Health care workers need medical masks, including surgical masks, medical procedure masks, and respirators, such as N95 masks. It is extremely important to maintain the supply of medical masks where it is needed.
- The Government of Canada is working to ensure that health care workers have the PPE and medical supplies they need. We are doing this through collaborative bulk procurement with the provinces and territories, building domestic production capacity, and identifying potential alternatives and ways to extend product life.
- Canada is working to rapidly allocate PPE and medical supplies to the provinces and territories as per an approach agreed upon by federal, provincial and territorial Ministers of Health.

Guidance and concerns from the Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions:

- We have engaged regularly with the Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions about their concerns with some aspects of the updated guidance.

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- The Government of Canada has developed this guidance based on the best available evidence to protect the health and safety of health care workers.
- We will continue to reassess and update our guidance as the situation evolves and we learn more about COVID-19.

Point of Care Risk Assessment

- Before any patient interaction or procedure, all health care workers should assess the infectious risks posed to themselves, other patients and other workers. This is called Point of Care Risk Assessment, and is the basis for selecting the appropriate PPE.

Inclusion of cleaners or food providers who could be exposed to COVID-19:

- The advice in this guidance document covers anyone working in acute health care, including cleaners and food providers.

Use of surgical masks rather than N95 respirators:

- The choice of a surgical mask or N95 respirator should always be informed by a point of care risk assessment.

Re-use of PPE and guidance for health care facilities:

- N95 masks have historically been single-use products that are used by health care workers.
- Canada is exploring ways to extend the use of N95 respirators by decontaminating and reusing them. Decontamination of N95 respirators has been successful in other countries, including the United States.
- Canada is asking provinces and territories to set their used N95 respirators aside while a process for successful decontamination of the masks can be tested.
- Extending the use of PPE through decontamination is one way of helping to ensure that Canada has enough supply.

Infection Prevention and Control Guidance for Home Care Settings

- As a critical part of our health care system, home care organizations play a key role in preventing unnecessary hospital and long-term care admissions by supporting and caring for individuals in their homes.
- People being cared for at home are often older and/or have underlying illnesses, which are risk factors for more serious COVID-19 infection. Preventing COVID-19 infection among this vulnerable population is a priority.
- The Public Health Agency of Canada's (PHAC) infection prevention and control guidance provides recommendations to home care organizations and providers to prevent the

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transmission of COVID-19 to frontline home care workers and to protect vulnerable clients in home care settings.

- PHAC's National Advisory Committee on Infection Prevention and Control, comprising infection prevention and control experts, and front-line care providers, worked with PHAC to develop this guidance, which is also endorsed by the Federal, Provincial and Territorial Special Advisory Committee on COVID-19.
- PHAC guidance is not mandatory. It should be read in conjunction with relevant provincial, territorial and local legislation, regulations and policies.

Guidance highlights:

- To prevent transmission of COVID-19 to clients, home care providers are asked to monitor themselves for signs and symptoms of COVID-19, and to take their temperature daily. If home care providers show signs of infection, it is recommended that they be excluded from work until they are cleared to return by local public health.
- To protect home care clients from transmission of COVID-19 before symptoms are recognized, home care providers should wear masks for the full duration of home visits.
- To protect the frontline home care providers, they should contact their clients before visits to ask about whether they, or anyone in their household, has signs or symptoms of COVID-19. Home care organizations and providers can then determine whether the visit can be delayed or conducted in another way to ensure that home care providers and clients stay safe.
- To prevent possible transmission of COVID-19 to home care providers from unrecognized infection in clients, eye protection for home care providers should be strongly considered for the full duration of home visits.

Canada's supply of personal protective equipment (PPE) and medical supplies:

- Personal protective equipment (PPE) is an important part of the infection prevention and control measures that can be used to protect home care workers and their clients from COVID-19 infection.
- Home care providers should refer to local, provincial or territorial guidance and facility policies on specific recommendations for use of masks, eye protection and other PPE, and PPE conservation strategies.
- The Government of Canada is working to ensure that health care workers, including those who provide home care services, have the PPE and medical supplies they need.
- We are doing this through collaborative bulk procurement with the provinces and territories, building domestic production capacity, and identifying potential alternatives and ways to extend product life.

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Long-term Care Facilities

- We are calling on all Canadians to help protect older adults and medically vulnerable people, who are at greatest risk of severe health complications linked to COVID-19.
- We all need to do our part to help stop the spread of the virus among the residents of long-term care homes, as well as the workers who care for them.
- A "no visitor" policy should be strongly considered. If visitors are permitted, they should be strictly limited to those who are essential, meaning necessary to basic personal care medical or compassionate resident care. Essential visitors should be limited to one person at a time for each resident.
- Like all Canadians, residents and staff within long-term care homes should practise physical distancing to the greatest extent possible, including during meal times.
- Because they have direct contact with the most vulnerable in our society who are at highest risk of severe illness, health care workers should not go to work if they have symptoms.
- We understand that the efforts of Canadians to stop the spread of COVID-19 and to protect our most vulnerable involve difficult decisions and personal sacrifices.

Guidelines:

- The Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) develops evidence-informed infection prevention and control guidance to complement provincial and territorial public health efforts in monitoring, preventing and controlling healthcare-associated infections.
- The Government of Canada has released Infection Prevention and Control for COVID-19: Interim Guidance for Long-Term Care Homes to support the staff and residents in these facilities.
- This interim guidance is based on previous Canadian guidance developed for the coronavirus pandemic, lessons learned from the COVID-19 outbreak in China and other countries, and interim guidance from other Canadian and international bodies.

Public health guidance for long-term care homes:

- Long-term care homes should maintain a high level of vigilance to ensure that staff do not report to work with symptoms.
- Staff should be screened for symptoms of COVID-19 before every shift, and any staff member developing symptoms during a shift should be managed immediately.
- Wherever possible, employers should work with their staff to limit work to only a single facility, and to limit the number of locations in the facility in which the employees work.
- All staff and visitors should wear masks for the duration of their shifts or visits in order to prevent transmission of the virus, even before they are aware they are ill.
- If visitation is required, visitors should be screened for fever, cough or difficulty breathing, and prevented from entering if they have any COVID-related symptoms.

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- Many facilities have already implemented measures, such as barring visitation or other non-essential on-site services.
- These facilities should also follow the recommendations for preventing transmission of infections, including COVID-19, in long-term care and assisted-living facilities developed by the relevant provincial or territorial health authority.

Alberta Long-Term Care Homes

- The Government of Canada is committed to protecting all Canadians, including vulnerable individuals.
- All levels of government are working in close collaboration so that public health measures to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic are in alignment.
- Public health authorities are closely monitoring for continued and stable slowing of the epidemic in Canada, while carefully considering approaches to ease public health restrictions when and where this may be possible.
- The epidemiology of COVID-19 is different in each jurisdiction. This means that approaches across Canada will not all be the same and will need to be tailored to the unique challenges and context of the disease in each province and territory.
- Each jurisdiction in Canada is looking at different kinds of community settings—such as long-term care homes—and developing risk-based approaches and assessments based on what is taking place within their jurisdiction.
- The Government of Canada is working with provincial, territorial and international partners to ensure that our response to the COVID-19 pandemic is based on the latest science and situational assessment.

On whether this approach is consistent with federal guidance:

- Care in long-term care facilities-based care is governed by provincial and territorial legislation.
- The Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) develops evidence-informed infection prevention and control guidance to complement provincial and territorial public health efforts in monitoring, preventing and controlling healthcare-associated infections.
- Federal guidance recognizes that jurisdictions may choose to allow visitors limited access to long-term care facilities consistent with their legislation and policies.
- In these circumstances, we recommend that all staff and visitors, if allowed, should wear masks for the duration of their shifts or visits in order to prevent transmission of the virus, even if they have no symptoms of illness.
- If visitation is permitted, visitors should be screened for fever, cough or difficulty breathing, and prevented from entering if they have any COVID-related symptoms.
- Visitors, if allowed, should be reminded of the importance of hand hygiene and use alcohol-based hand rubs during their visits before putting on masks and before taking off masks.

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- These facilities should also follow the recommendations of the relevant provincial or territorial health authority for preventing transmission of infections, including COVID-19, in long-term care and assisted-living facilities. Care in long-term care facilities is governed by provincial and territorial legislation.
- PHAC's infection prevention and control guidance for long-term care facilities should be read in conjunction with relevant provincial, territorial and local legislation, regulations, and policies.
- As we move into the next phase of this pandemic, jurisdictions will begin to ease restrictions while stressing extreme caution.

Guidance on Death Care Services and Mass Fatalities

- PHAC has developed guidance on the safe handling of human remains during the COVID-19 pandemic. All information provided in the guidance reflects the latest scientific evidence.
- We know that hearing about guidance like this can be difficult, especially for those who have lost a loved one, and we extend our sincere condolences to all who have lost a family member, friend or colleague to the disease.
- At the same time, the guidance on funeral care services and mass fatalities is an important part of pandemic planning and preparedness.
- Our understanding of the virus is continually evolving, and the risk of a transmission of COVID-19 from dead bodies is not yet known.
- We developed the guidance in collaboration with public health and infection prevention and control experts along with the Funeral Services Association of Canada to ensure the safe provision of services to families and to protect the health of those working to provide these services to the public.

If pressed on the development of the guidance in response to recent outbreaks in long term care facilities:

- This guidance was developed to support the death care industry in proactive planning for potential scenarios during the pandemic.

If pressed on Indigenous/ethnic/religious/cultural body treatment or funeral practices:

- A number of religious, ethnic and cultural groups have specific directives about how bodies are managed after death. It is important to respect and accommodate these practices as much as possible while ensuring the health and safety of the community.
- We recommend that cultural and religious leaders be involved in planning for funeral services to help ensure that funeral arrangements continue to be culturally and religiously appropriate.

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- Leaders may also be able to offer or facilitate cultural and religious support to those in mourning, including bereavement counselling.

If pressed on what happens if a Canadian dies of COVID-19 outside Canada:

- You can safely repatriate to Canada someone who has been identified as having died from COVID-19, providing certain conditions are met.
- In all cases, you must have appropriate documentation including a death certificate.
- Two options for repatriation of remains exist for people who were suspected or confirmed to have had COVID-19:
 - The body is cremated; or
 - The body is transported in a hermetically sealed container.
- We understand that this may pose some restrictions to families who are trying to return to Canada with the remains of a loved one. These restrictions are necessary to help protect their health and safety and the health and safety of individuals who will come into contact with the remains during the repatriation process.
- General information on what to do if someone dies while abroad is available through funeral providers in your community or on the Government of Canada website at <https://travel.gc.ca/assistance/emergency-info/death-abroad>.

If pressed on managing mass fatalities:

- Based on the experience of other countries, it is important to be prepared for an increase in the number of COVID-19-related deaths in Canada, which could overwhelm traditional capacity for funeral services.
- PHAC has released guidance that aims to assist local and regional planners, community leaders, funeral service workers, medical examiners, and coroners in preparing to manage any surge in deaths relating to the pandemic.
- The guidance is based on the latest scientific evidence, and provides recommendations for the transportation of bodies, planning recommendations, storage capacity and other technical factors.

Isolation, Quarantine (Self-Isolation) and Physical Distancing

- There is a difference between advice to quarantine (self-isolate) and advice to isolate. It is important to note these measures are in place to protect the health and safety of Canadians.

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Isolation

- Isolation means staying at home when you have a symptom of COVID-19 and it is possible that you have been exposed to the virus. By avoiding contact with other people, you help prevent the spread of disease to others in your home and your community.

You must:

- **go directly home and/or stay at home** if you have:
 - been diagnosed with COVID-19, or are waiting to hear the results of a lab test for COVID-19
 - any symptom of COVID-19, even if mild, and have
 - been in contact with a suspected, probable or confirmed case of COVID-19
 - been told by public health (directly, through public communications or through a self-assessment tool) that you may have been exposed to COVID-19
 - returned from travel outside Canada with symptoms of COVID-19 (mandatory)
- monitor your symptoms as directed by your healthcare provider or Public Health Authority until they advise you that you are no longer at risk of spreading the virus to others
- immediately contact your healthcare provider or Public Health Authority and follow their instructions if your symptoms get worse.
- **Limit contact with others**
 - Do not leave home unless it's to seek medical care.
 - Do not use public transportation (e.g., buses, taxis).
 - Arrange to have groceries and supplies dropped off at your door to minimize contact.
 - 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, practise physical distancing and keep at least 2 metres between yourself and the other person.
 - Avoid contact with individuals with chronic conditions, compromised immune systems and older adults.
 - Keep any interactions brief and wear a medical mask if available, or if not available, a non-medical mask or face covering (i.e. constructed to completely cover the nose and mouth without gaping, and secured to the head by ties or ear loops) when coughing, sneezing or if you need to be in the same room with others in the home.
 - Follow instructions online for the safe use and disposal or laundering of face masks, or as provided by your Public Health Authority.
 - Avoid contact with animals, as there have been several reports of people transmitting COVID-19 to their pets.
- **Keep your hands clean**
 - Wash your hands **often** with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, and dry with disposable paper towels or dry reusable towel, replacing it when it becomes wet.
 - You can also remove dirt with a wet wipe and then use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

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- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.
 - Cough or sneeze into the bend of your arm or into a tissue.
 - Avoid contaminating common items and surfaces
 - At least once daily, clean and disinfect surfaces that you touch often, like toilets, bedside tables, doorknobs, phones and television remotes.
 - Do not share personal items with others, such as toothbrushes, towels, bed linen, utensils or electronic devices.
 - To disinfect, use only approved hard-surface disinfectants that have a Drug Identification Number (DIN). A DIN is an 8-digit number given by Health Canada that confirms the disinfectant product is approved and safe for use in Canada.
 - Place contaminated items that cannot be cleaned in a lined container, secure the contents and dispose of them with other household waste.
 - Put the lid of the toilet down before flushing.
 - Wearing a face mask, including a non-medical mask or facial covering, may trap respiratory droplets and stop them from contaminating surfaces around you - but wearing a mask does not reduce the need for cleaning.
- **Care for yourself**
 - Monitor your symptoms as directed by your health care provider or public health authority.
 - If your symptoms get worse, immediately contact your health care 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**
 - Medical masks if available for the case and the caregiver. If not available, non-medical mask or face covering (i.e. constructed to completely cover the nose and mouth without gaping, and secured to the head by ties or ear loops)
 - Eye protection (face shield or goggles) for use by caregiver
 - Disposable gloves (do not re-use) for use by caregiver
 - 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
 - Hard-surface disinfectant, or if not available, concentrated (5%) liquid bleach and a separate container for dilution
 - Alcohol prep wipes or appropriate cleaning products for high-touch electronics

Self-Isolation (Quarantine)

- Quarantine for 14 days if you have **no symptoms** and **any** of the following apply:

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- you are returning from travel **outside of Canada** (mandatory quarantine)
- you had close contact with someone who has or is suspected to have COVID-19
- you have been told by the public health authority that you may have been exposed and need to quarantine
- Quarantine means that for 14 days you need to:
 - **stay at home** and monitor yourself for symptoms, even if mild
 - avoid contact with others to help prevent transmission of the virus at the earliest stage of illness
 - practise physical (social) distancing in your home and community
- If you develop symptoms, even if mild, stay home and isolate yourself from others. Immediately call a health care professional or your public health authority.

Physical distancing

- We are advising Canadians to stay home, if possible. If you must leave your home, practise physical distancing.
- Physical distancing is proven to be one of the most effective ways to reduce the spread of illness during an outbreak.
- Everyone needs to practice physical distancing, even if you have:
 - NO symptoms of COVID-19
 - NO known risk of exposure
 - not travelled outside of Canada within the last 14 days.
- You can practise physical distancing by making changes in your everyday routines to minimize close contact with others. For example:
 - avoiding crowded places and gatherings
 - avoiding common greetings, such as handshakes
 - limiting contact with people at higher risk (e.g. older adults and those in poor health)
 - keeping a distance of at least 2 arms lengths (approximately 2 metres) from others, as much as possible
- To stay healthy and prevent the spread of respiratory and other illnesses is to:
 - wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds;
 - cough and sneeze into your sleeve and not your hands;
 - avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth, especially with unwashed hands;
 - avoid close contact with people who are sick; and
 - stay home if you are sick to avoid spreading illness to others.
- While keeping a physical distance of 2 metres from others, you can:
 - greet with a wave instead of a handshake, a kiss or a hug
 - use food delivery services or online shopping

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- ask family, a neighbor or friend to help with essential errands
- exercise at home
- go outside for some fresh air, a run, a bike ride, or to walk the dog
- host online dinners and games with family and friends
- use technology, such as video calls, to keep in touch with family and friends
- work from home
- get creative by drawing chalk art or running back yard obstacle courses and games

Be Prepared

- 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:
 - Have 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.
- We are aware that the novel coronavirus can cause a range of mild to severe symptoms. It is possible that individuals will not recognize when they first develop symptoms, because they can be similar to a cold or flu.
- If you have symptoms (fever, cough or difficulty breathing) and suspect you may have COVID-19, contact a health professional before arriving in person so that the appropriate measures can be taken when you arrive.
- Do not go to a health care provider without calling ahead so that appropriate measures can be taken when you arrive.

Stay informed

- Go to credible sources for up-to-date information and advice:
 - the [Canada.ca/coronavirus](https://www.canada.ca/coronavirus) web page;
 - the national toll-free phone number (1-833-784-4397) for COVID-19;
 - Government of Canada Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn social media accounts; and
 - provincial, territorial and municipal government websites and social media accounts.



Enforcing Isolation and Quarantine (Self-Isolation)

- For questions regarding whether Canada would ever consider fining or arresting individuals who are not following the advice to self-isolate:
 - We are asking Canadians to **do the right thing** and to continue to stay home, if possible, and to practice physical distancing if they leave their home.
 - Canadians need to understand the role that they play personally and the potential risk that they may have been exposed to the virus during any travel outside the country and the risk that they in turn may pose to other Canadians including the most vulnerable.
 - Canadians need to also respect any guidance given to them by local public health and, if they are sick, they need to stay home.
 - The failure to comply is a real concern. Individuals who are asked to self-isolate should take this seriously and stay home. If there is a need to leave home for food and/or medication, efforts should be made to ask a friend or family member to help out.
 - For Canadians not self-isolating, there will continue to be the need to leave their homes for essential items like food and medication. As long as individuals do not have COVID-19 symptoms, people can also continue to get fresh air and exercise outdoors while practicing physical distancing.
 - This will help protect older adults and medically vulnerable people who are at greatest risk of severe COVID-19 disease. We need to help as many Canadians as possible to stay healthy.

If pressed:

- There are some very powerful measures under the Quarantine Acts within every level of government, to help enforce measures to protect the health and safety of Canadians. A number of provinces and territories have put in place mandatory self-isolation orders.
- Such extreme action could take place, but we are not at that point and we continue to expect Canadians to help their neighbours, friends and family by continuing to stay at home as much as possible, wash their hands often and avoid close contact with people who are sick.

Criteria for individuals to discontinue home isolation after COVID-19 symptoms

- Based on the latest science and in consultation with provincial and territorial experts, we have updated the guidance on when individuals can end a period of home isolation following the presence of COVID-19 symptoms.
- The new guidance recommends that an individual in home isolation, who had symptoms consistent with COVID-19, can end home isolation a minimum of 10 days after the onset of their first symptoms, provided they are feeling better and do not have a fever.

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- The 10 day minimum is based on when these people are no longer expected to be able to spread the virus to others. Some people can have a persistent cough after an illness like COVID-19 and we do not want to keep them isolated longer than necessary.
- This new guidance means that an individual on home isolation no longer needs to have two negative COVID-19 tests 24 hours apart once they no longer exhibit symptoms consistent with COVID-19.
- This change does not apply to hospitalized patients.
- Provinces and territories may impose a longer period of isolation. Individuals who work in health care settings may need to meet additional requirements, as set out by their employer or provincial/territorial jurisdiction, before they are able to return to their workplace.
- Everyone has to contribute to reducing the spread of COVID-19 in Canada and flattening the curve. Using tried and true measures such as continuing to practise physical distancing once home isolation has ended will help our overall public health efforts and protect Canada's most vulnerable people.

If pressed on why the criteria are being changed

- Across Canada, we need to strategically use laboratory testing resources.
- This change to the approach for laboratory testing will help ensure the best use of limited health and laboratory resources.
- Not all persons on home isolation with symptoms consistent with COVID-19 require a laboratory test to confirm or rule out infection, provided they adhere to strict home isolation guidance.
- The updated criteria will allow the provinces and territories to recommend a period of home isolation for individuals with symptoms consistent with COVID-19 without requiring multiple laboratory tests.

If pressed on how the time period was decided upon

- The research and data on COVID-19 continues to grow and evolve.
- One unpublished study found that when scientists tried to find live virus in specimens from people who had COVID-19, no live virus could be found by the eighth day after onset of illness/symptoms. When these same people were tested using a different test (polymerase chain reaction (PCR)) several of them still came up as positive because that test can detect both live and dead virus.
- This means some people can test positive even though they are no longer at risk of spreading the virus to others.

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- In the absence of a large amount of conclusive data, a minimum of 10 days of home isolation is an appropriate recommendation at this time.

If pressed on whether the new criteria are more or less stringent than previous criteria

- The new guidance replaces the current, more stringent and resource intensive, requirement for individuals to receive two negative tests before being allowed to end home isolation.

Use of non-medical masks (or facial coverings) by the public

- Canadian public health guidance related to COVID-19 has been changing as the evidence base and our understanding of COVID-19 is rapidly evolving. We are continually looking at the evidence as it is being produced and working with our partners across the country and around the world to learn more.
- To prevent transmission of COVID-19 here is what we know is proven:
 - Staying home as much as possible
 - Physical distancing
 - Washing your hands
 - Protecting the most vulnerable from infection and exposure to others
 - Covering your cough with tissues or your sleeve
- It is critical that these measures continue.
- Healthcare workers need medical masks, including surgical, medical procedure masks and respirators such as N95 masks. It is extremely important that we keep the supply of medical masks for healthcare workers where it is urgently needed for medical procedures and to care for individuals who have COVID-19.
- Wearing a non-medical mask or face covering (ie constructed to completely cover the nose and mouth without gaping, and secured to the head by ties or ear loops) in the community has not been proven to protect the person wearing it.
- However, with the emerging information regarding pre-symptomatic and asymptomatic transmission, and our goal to stop the spread of COVID-19 by all means possible, wearing a non-medical mask—even if you have no symptoms—can be an additional measure you can take to protect others around you, for short periods of time, when physical distancing is not possible in public settings (e.g., grocery shopping, in close settings such as public transit).
- Wearing a non-medical mask in the community does not mean you can back off the public health measures that we know work to protect you; no mask will ever replace physical distancing.
- All of the recommendations regarding staying home, physical distancing, and hand hygiene are based on what we know will work best to protect you and your family from infection.

How wearing non-medical masks can help protect others

- Wearing a non-medical mask is another way of covering your mouth and nose to prevent your respiratory droplets from contaminating others or landing on surfaces.

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- A non-medical mask or face covering can reduce the chance that others are coming into contact with your respiratory droplets, in the same way that our recommendation to cover your cough with tissues or your sleeve can reduce that chance.

Considerations when wearing non-medical masks

- If wearing a non-medical mask makes you feel safer and stops you from touching your nose and mouth, that is good. Remember not to touch or rub your eyes as that is another route of infection.
- Canadians need to understand exactly what wearing a mask will achieve, and that if they choose to wear non-medical masks they need to be used safely:
 - Avoid moving the mask around or adjusting it often.
 - Masks should not be shared with others.
 - It should be constructed to completely cover the nose and mouth without gaping, and secured to the head by ties or ear loops)
- People should also be aware that masks can become contaminated on the outside or when touched by hands.
- Non-medical masks or facial coverings should not be placed on young children under age 2, anyone who has trouble breathing, or is unconscious, incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the mask without assistance.
- Please remember that non-medical masks will not prevent COVID-19 spread without consistent and strict adherence to good hygiene and public health measures, including frequent handwashing and physical distancing.
- The website Canada.ca/coronavirus is updated with information on the measures you should take, such as hand washing, when putting a mask on or taking it off. There is also information on how to wash cloth masks or safely dispose of other non-medical masks.

Modelling and Surveillance:

Surveillance for COVID-19

- Canada's health system has been on high alert to detect possible COVID-19 cases for many weeks.
- Canada remains focussed on containment efforts to delay and slow the spread of COVID-19. We do this by rapidly identifying cases, meticulously finding close contacts and using proven public health measures such as isolation and recommending that Canadians practise physical distancing.
- Canada has a highly integrated federal, provincial and territorial approach to surveillance, involving front-line healthcare settings and laboratories across the country that have effectively equipped us to detect respiratory illnesses, including COVID-19.

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- Public health laboratories across Canada are also working together to report COVID-19 test results weekly. These reports will allow us to monitor where COVID-19 is occurring, which can provide us with an early signal of potential clusters that can indicate community spread.
- Hospital surveillance is another important area for detection of COVID-19. These sites allow us to monitor for people with respiratory symptoms, including those with pneumonia or severe infections, even if they have not travelled to an affected country. This is another means of broadening the scope of our surveillance to identify signals of potential community spread so that public health authorities can take appropriate action.
- Finally, Canada has established networks of paediatricians and family doctors that are essential to surveillance. These networks include providers at the front line of primary care, who are often the first to detect new or unexpected patterns of illness that may be a first alert to an emerging health concern.
- It is by bringing data together from all these sources that we can detect signals and investigate transmission patterns to closely monitor the emergence and spread of COVID-19 in communities across Canada.

Modelling Data (Released April 28)

- The Government of Canada is continuing to work with provincial, territorial and international partners to ensure that our response to the COVID-19 epidemic is based on the latest science and situational assessment.
- We continually analyze data and clinical and epidemiological studies as they emerge to determine when public health measures are working and when we may need to do more to control the epidemic.
- We are also collaborating with federal, provincial and territorial governments and universities to forecast the possible future spread of COVID-19 in Canada and to estimate a range of possible numbers of cases, hospitalizations and deaths that may occur in the coming weeks and months.
- Based on these models, we can prepare our health system to provide care for the projected number of patients and assess what additional public health measures we may need to change the course of the epidemic in Canada.
- The models are highly sensitive to our actions. We can all help lower the impact of COVID-19 in Canada, by keeping up our physical distancing efforts.
- Just as case rates are different across the country, so too are projections about the impacts in various provinces and territories.
- Models cannot predict what will happen. But they can help us understand what might happen, which can help us plan and take actions to achieve the best possible outcome.
- Modelling for COVID-19 requires that we make assumptions based on incomplete data and evolving science. These assumptions change as we get new information about the virus and more data about the epidemic in Canada.

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- We are continually improving the models to provide the best available information to Canadians about possible outcomes.

Quebec's rate of cases and deaths

- Several factors are contributing to Quebec's higher numbers of reported cases and deaths relative to those of other provinces and territories.
- Most importantly, both Quebec and Ontario have reported numerous outbreaks in long-term care homes and senior residences. Transmission in these settings is driving a large number of cases and deaths among older adults. More than 80% of deaths in Quebec are among residents of these homes.
- Long-term care facilities continue to experience outbreaks, which are driving cases and deaths in some provinces. Based on provincial and territorial websites and press briefings, above half of all deaths, 63% (1,157/1,834), have occurred in long-term care facilities.
- The timing of the school break in Quebec is another factor that could have contributed to the higher number of cases. Quebec's school break occurred earlier than that of other provinces, with people travelling to countries and regions that had unrecognized outbreaks.
- A difference in reporting methods may also contribute to higher case counts in Quebec. Quebec includes individuals without waiting for laboratory diagnosis if they have symptoms of COVID and have been in close contact with a laboratory-confirmed case. Quebec counts these individuals in their counts of cases and deaths whereas other provinces and territories do not.
 - Quebec's public health authority can provide more clarity on how it reports confirmed cases.
- The province of Quebec was able to ramp up its testing capacity early on in the outbreak, with a more targeted testing approach (including testing for healthcare workers, long-term care residents, hospitalized cases with respiratory illness), which enabled them to identify cases.

If pressed on whether case numbers are underestimated in other provinces and territories

- Other provinces and territories publicly include only individuals with a laboratory diagnosis in their confirmed case count.
- We know that laboratory-confirmed cases underestimate the true number of infected individuals in all provinces where the virus is circulating. This is because not every person who is sick will get tested and be recorded as a lab-confirmed case.

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- People with mild illness may go undetected and unreported and some people who are infected will not experience any symptoms at all. This is why public health measures such as physical distancing are so important.

Virus epidemiology

- In Canada, and around the world, researchers are actively investigating all aspects of the novel coronavirus outbreak to further understand this disease and how the outbreak may progress.
- Canada is following the guidance of the WHO, which recommends a quarantine period of two weeks (14 days).
- The WHO noted on February 10, 2020, that it is not considering changing its recommended quarantine time.
- The World Health Organization (WHO) has cautioned that a 24-day incubation period could be an outlier or an unrecognized second exposure. An unrecognized second exposure is a situation where an individual already recognized as having been exposed to the virus is exposed to the virus again but this second exposure is not recognized. If they develop illness due to the second exposure it may mistakenly appear like the incubation period is longer than 14 days because the “clock” was not “re-set” at the time of the second exposure.
- To date, there has been no verified data to suggest the incubation period extends beyond 14 days.
- PHAC is an active participant in a number of expert groups that are examining how the disease is transmitted, developing models to predict how it may spread, and developing guidance for infection prevention and control based on the most recent information.
- The Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) continues to liaise with international partners, including the World Health Organization (WHO), to better understand the epidemiology of this disease

Testing

- Canadians can be confident in the methods and laboratory capabilities of Canada’s National Microbiology Laboratory (NML).
- The NML is internationally recognized for its scientific excellence.
- Provincial public health laboratories can test for COVID-19 with a very high degree of accuracy.
- The NML is providing all provinces and territories with laboratory reference services. These testing services provide a variety of support to provincial and territorial laboratories across Canada including confirmatory testing, quality assurance, and in-depth analysis of difficult to diagnose specimens.

Reagents and Testing for COVID-19

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- Accurate and timely testing is an essential part of the public health response to this pandemic. Such testing enables early detection of cases so that further spread can be controlled.
- The Government of Canada is taking action to ramp up testing capacity as quickly as possible so that Canadian public health and diagnostic laboratories have the resources to test for COVID-19.
- There are several Health Canada-approved commercial reagents that can be used for testing for COVID-19 infection. There is a global shortage of many of these reagents, and this affects laboratory capacity. We need made-in-Canada solutions to tackle this problem.
- Shortage of reagents required for COVID-19 testing is affecting Canada's testing capacity. The Public Health Agency's National Microbiology Laboratory has developed a reagent to help address this shortage. This reagent is being mass-produced by Luminultra Technologies Ltd., a New Brunswick-based company.
- PHAC has also signed a temporary licence agreement with bioMérieux Canada, to receive the rights and formulation for its reagent that is used in COVID-19 diagnostics.
- The Government of Canada's testing priorities are accessing testing reagents, evaluating commercial testing technologies, and accessing authorized test kits in order to equip provinces and territories to expand their testing.

On Luminultra

- Scientists from Canada's National Microbiology Laboratory (NML) have replicated and validated a commercial COVID-19 reagent using open source information. This reagent is comparable to those used in diagnostic laboratories across the country.
- Luminultra Technologies Ltd. is purchasing the raw ingredients needed to develop the NML-formulated batches of reagent, and is coordinating the shipment of the reagent to public health laboratories across the country.
- Luminultra shipped its first batch of reagent on April 10, 2020.
- At full capacity, Luminultra will be able to manufacture reagent for up to 500,000 tests a week.
- It is expected that, as its production capacity scales up, Luminultra will be able to produce enough reagent to help meet national demand.

On the bioMérieux agreement:

- bioMérieux is a French company that produces reagents used in COVID-19 diagnostic testing. The company is facing challenges obtaining certain ingredients needed to manufacture and meet global demand of its product.
- In an innovative public-private partnership, the Public Health Agency of Canada has signed a temporary licence agreement with bioMérieux Canada at no cost, to receive the rights and formulation for their reagents that are used in COVID-19 diagnostics. The production systems to

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produce these reagents are in various stages of development and testing, with the goal of alleviating some of the shortages of reagents in the near future.

What are reagents?

- A reagent is a chemical formulation used to process specimens for laboratory testing.
- The specific reagents being produced for COVID-19 testing are extraction reagents.
- They extract the virus from a specimen so that the genetic material can be detected, and determine whether a patient is positive or negative for COVID-19 infection.

Testing individuals

- Testing for the novel coronavirus in symptomatic individuals has clear clinical and public health value, but the same is not true for testing asymptomatic persons.
- Canada has and will continue to test all symptomatic individuals, as part of our evidence-based approach, while considering the evolving science on other testing scenarios. As the science evolves, our approach will keep pace, and policies and protocols will be updated accordingly.
- One thing that is clear in our approach is that we test all symptomatic individuals and our threshold for that has been very low.
- It is important to understand that this is not a simple or straightforward issue, and the science is not clear.

Why asymptomatic people are not being tested for COVID-19:

- It is important to focus on testing the right people at the right time.
- Testing in Canada is focused on people who present with symptoms consistent with COVID-19.
- Testing people who are asymptomatic is not considered an effective approach to detecting and preventing the spread of this virus and may give a false sense of reassurance.
- Testing asymptomatic individuals offers a false sense of reassurance, because it does not mean that an individual will not go on to become symptomatic and develop disease within the incubation period. The timing of testing matters. This is why we took the precaution to quarantine individuals again in Canada. There is a real assurance in monitoring for the 14-day incubation period and that means more for preventing spread than a potentially false negative test result.
- In addition, if an asymptomatic individual was tested and the test was positive, it is not clear what the significance and implications are. A positive test could mean presence of virus genetic material was detected, but that does not mean the person is necessarily infectious to others.

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Unusable Testing Kit Swabs

- The Government of Canada is aware that there are issues with some of the testing kit swabs that were received in early April.
- These swabs were part of a bulk order of 8.85 million swabs to be delivered throughout April and May in Canada.
- The manufacturing company (ESBE Scientific) is a reputable one, licensed by Health Canada. We have been informed that the company has paused subsequent production to address issues in the manufacturing process. As a result, remaining swab shipments will likely be delayed to address quality issues.
- This issue may have implications for future orders. The Public Health Agency of Canada continues to work directly with provinces and territories to identify their medical supply needs in order to place bulk buy orders. Public Services and Procurement Canada will continue to identify all available suppliers that have the capacity to respond to Canada's needs.

Amendments to the Authorization of the Spartan Test Kit

- On March 26, 2020, Health Canada issued an authorization with terms and conditions to Spartan Bioscience Inc. for its Spartan Cube for research use only.
- This authorization was made under the [Interim Order](#) for medical devices in the context of COVID-19, which enables Health Canada to authorize devices under an expedited scientific review process, on the basis of minimum requirements.
- On April 11, 2020, Health Canada completed its scientific review to ensure that the device was supported by evidence that it meets requirements for safety and effectiveness. The terms and conditions attached to the authorization were amended and the restriction that the product be sold for research only was lifted.
- Health Canada's regulatory decision was based on in-laboratory testing of the device and not on clinical trial data of its effectiveness. The review took into consideration that further validation would be carried out by public health laboratories in order to determine performance in clinical settings. This regulatory approach is consistent with those taken by other trusted regulators.
- On May 1, 2020, the NML provided Health Canada with a final report of clinical testing performed in three provinces (Alberta, Ontario and Manitoba) using Spartan swabs to collect specimens directly from patients under clinical conditions.
- The report identified that while the Spartan Cube performed in a laboratory setting, as per manufacturer specifications, there were performance issues identified in the clinical trial. These issues appear to be related to the proprietary swab, which may not sufficiently collect mucosal material necessary for testing.
- In light of the clinical results, on May 2, 2020, Health Canada has placed conditions on the company's authorization to restrict the sale of the product to research use only, until adequate evidence of clinical performance can be provided.

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- Health Canada has not cancelled the authorization, given evidence that the device performs well in laboratory settings. The Spartan product can continue to be sold for research purposes only until adequate evidence of clinical performance can be provided.
- Health Canada will continue to work with Spartan as they address the regulatory requirements to enable utilization of the point of care test kit.

If pressed on how many tests have been distributed following authorization of the test kits:

- Spartan Bioscience shared its distribution record with Health Canada on May 2nd and confirmed it has distributed 5,500 test kits for research purposes only in a clinical setting to four public health organizations:
 - Alberta Health Services
 - CHU de Québec-Université Laval
 - Ontario Agency for Health Protection & Promotion
 - Public Health Agency of Canada
- These organizations are aware of the new Health Canada conditions on Spartan's authorization.
- Health Canada asked the company to voluntarily recall the products, to prevent its use in diagnostic settings at this time. The company has indicated agreement to do so.
- The Department has sent a regulatory letter to the company on May 2nd to indicate the new conditions in accordance with Section 7 of the Interim Order. This letter also describes the steps needing to be followed for the voluntary recall.
- Health Canada has restricted the sale of the test kits to research use until adequate evidence of clinical performance can be provided and assessed.

If pressed on the details of the recall:

- The recall would include:
 - issuing an advisory to inform all customers of the risks associated with the use of the device for diagnostic purposes and steps to take to mitigate the risk;
 - requesting the recovery of all instruments and unused single use elements (e.g., reagents and swabs) from the non-laboratory-based environments and laboratory-based environments using this device for diagnostic purposes; and
 - requesting the recovery of the swabs only from laboratories that will continue to use the device for research purposes.

If pressed on Health Canada's review of the Spartan product:

- On March 26, 2020, Health Canada issued an authorization to Spartan Bioscience Inc. for its Spartan Cube that attached terms and conditions to restrict the sale of the product "for research use only." This authorization was made under the Interim Order for medical devices in the context of COVID-19, which enables Health Canada to authorize devices under an expedited scientific review process, on the basis of minimum requirements.

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- On April 11, 2020, Health Canada completed its scientific review to ensure that the device was supported by evidence that it meets requirements for safety and effectiveness. The terms and conditions attached to the authorization were amended and the restriction that the product be sold for research only was lifted.
- Health Canada's regulatory decision was based on in-laboratory testing of the device and not on clinical trial data of its effectiveness. The review took into consideration that further validation would be carried out by public health laboratories in order to determine performance in clinical settings. This regulatory approach is consistent with those taken by other trusted regulators.
- On May 1, 2020, the NML provided Health Canada with a final report of clinical testing performed in three provinces (Alberta, Ontario and Manitoba) using Spartan swabs to collect specimens directly from patients under clinical conditions. These clinical trials are key in identifying performance issues that could not have been identified in a laboratory setting. The report identified that while the Spartan Cube performed in a laboratory setting, as per manufacturer specifications, there were performance issues identified in the clinical trial. In light of this report, Health Canada further amended the terms and conditions on the authorization, restricting the sale of the Spartan Cube for research purposes only, until such time as data are provided by the company to indicate resolution of the performance issue, as well as sales information.

If pressed on the Public Health Agency of Canada's National Microbiology Laboratory's (NML) review of the test kit:

- As part of its research efforts, the Public Health Agency of Canada's NML performs scientific reviews of new medical devices.
- In response to the urgent nature of COVID-19, the NML performs test validation and assess the performance of diagnostic supplies such as COVID-19 testing kits.
- This test validation function is part of scientific research and is independent of Health Canada's regulatory approval process. While this validation process is separate from Health Canada's authorization process, the NML works closely in collaboration with Health Canada to share knowledge gained through the review process.
- The NML tests COVID-19 laboratory supplies for clinical diagnostic purposes to ensure they meet the gold standard used in public health laboratories. This validation process is to determine if the product can be used to obtain reliable and accurate results when diagnosing COVID-19.

If pressed on the Government's procurement of the Spartan test:

The Government of Canada has a procurement contract with Spartan to secure supply of these devices. The contract is conditional on the Spartan test kit being Health Canada authorized for sale in Canada.

Spartan Rapid Test Kits COVID-19

- Early diagnosis is critical to slowing and reducing the spread of COVID-19 in Canada.

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- As part of Canada's plan to mobilize industry to fight COVID-19, Health Canada has authorized a portable COVID-19 rapid test kit for healthcare providers to identify infections more quickly and conveniently. This will help stop the spread of the virus.
- The Spartan Bioscience test kit can diagnose COVID-19 in less than an hour without having to send a sample to a lab.
- The scientific review of the Spartan diagnostic test device was completed under expedited timelines as part of the Interim Order announced by the Minister of Health, Patty Hajdu, on March 18, 2020. Health Canada's review concluded that the device meets the requirements for safety and effectiveness.
- The Public Health Agency of Canada's National Microbiology Laboratory (NML) worked with Spartan to expedite the development and validation of its point-of-care technology, which will be especially helpful in remote areas.
- Health Canada will continue to monitor and assess the safety and effectiveness of these rapid test kits in the field to help ensure that they perform appropriately and deliver accurate results.
- We are continuing to work with companies from coast to coast to coast to ensure our health care workers have the tools they need to care for Canadians across the country.

If pressed on the accuracy of the test kits:

- Health Canada has maintained a science-informed approach to managing the pandemic, and the Interim Order authorization process includes a pre-market scientific review.
- The Spartan Biosciences diagnostic test kit was authorized by Health Canada under an Interim Order put in place by the Minister to allow for the exceptional importation of medical products as part of the response to the COVID-19 outbreak. The authorization follows a scientific assessment by Health Canada reviewers to ensure that the device meets standards for safety and effectiveness.
- For information about the performance of the Spartan test, please contact the manufacturer directly.

If pressed on numbers of test kits to be purchased:

- The Government of Canada has amended its procurement contract with Spartan to secure supply of the devices and 40,000 test kits per month for April, May and June 2020, and a further 200,000 test kits per month from July 2020 until March 2021.
- The Government of Canada is working to rapidly allocate these medical supplies to the provinces and territories as per an approach agreed upon by federal, provincial and territorial Ministers of Health.

About Spartan:

- Spartan Bioscience is an Ottawa-based company.

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- Spartan's research is supported by the National Research Council of Canada's Industrial Research Assistance Program.
- The company was awarded a Government of Canada contract to accelerate its innovative work on rapid COVID-19 diagnostic testing.

About the Interim Order:

- As an emergency public health measure, the Interim Order allows for expedited access to COVID-19-related medical devices.
- With the Interim Order, new diagnostic tests are being made readily accessible in Canada. They are listed on Health Canada's website.
- The Interim Order will also ensure that other COVID-19-related medical devices are available to treat, mitigate, or prevent COVID-19, as necessary.
- An Interim Order is one of the fastest mechanisms available to the Government of Canada to make health products available to help address larger-scale, public health emergency situations.

If pressed on the U.S. directive to allow unauthorized health products:

- Health Canada will continue to use all tools at its disposal to expedite supply of safe and effective health products related to COVID-19. However, the Department is not providing blanket approval of unauthorized drugs or devices. We will update Canadians with any new information as it arises.

If pressed on cost recovery:

- To remove impediments for manufacturers in this time of public health need, Health Canada will waive all application fees for COVID-19 medical devices subject to this Interim Order.

Serology and Immunity Passports

- There is an active international effort to assess whether those who have recovered from illness are safe to go back to work. No decisions have been made yet in Canada on whether we can certify individuals with their immunity status.
- COVID-19 is an emerging virus and that means we need more data before we know if those who have recovered will have long-lasting protective immunity.
- Right now, we do not know if people who've recovered will have immunity, how long that immunity may last, or if it's possible for individuals to get COVID-19 twice, or experience milder or more serious illness if they get COVID-19 a second time.
- We recognize that waiting for the science can be difficult but, while we learn more about COVID-19, we have to use public health measures that we know are effective.

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- We are continuing to advise Canadians to stay home, practice good hand hygiene, and if you have to leave your home, practise physical distancing. These are tried and true public health measures that we know work.
- We are working hard to improve our understanding of COVID-19 across Canada so we can continue to adapt our response to slow the spread of the virus.

Canada-Wide Study to Track COVID-19

- Every day, we are adding to our knowledge of COVID-19, and keeping pace with the rapid growth of new scientific evidence as it emerges. The scientific evidence gathered through the work of this task force will provide critical knowledge to inform decision-making.
- Conducting large serological (blood test) surveys of the Canadian population will measure the scope and scale of COVID-19 infections across the country.
- This effort needs to be well-coordinated and well-executed to achieve the best results to inform policy decisions on ways to bring the country back to normal or to a “new normal”.
- We are establishing a task force of organizations that will work together under the direction of a Governing Board charged with setting priorities and recommending projects for funding to the Government of Canada. The leadership team is comprised of three individuals who are well-renowned for their contributions to research, academia, and innovation in both public health and healthcare both in Canada and internationally.
- The Governing Board will be co-chaired by:
 - Dr. David Naylor, well known for his scientific and academic leadership and successful management of large and complex organizations;
 - Dr. Catherine Hankins, who brings domestic and international experience in leading large and complex research endeavours and in creating partnerships to advance public health priorities.
 - Dr. Tim Evans, Director, School of Population and Global Health, at McGill University, will lead the Secretariat responsible for the efficient execution of this complex endeavour.
- The task force will catalyse, support, and harmonize the design and rapid implementation of population-based studies that will generate reliable first estimates of SARS-CoV-2 immunity, overall and in priority populations across Canada.
- The Public Health Agency of Canada’s National Microbiology Laboratory will be part of the task force and will provide testing standardization and support procurement of commercial test kits (once approved) to support the efficient and standardized operations of the task force.
- Rapid and representative national surveys provide a snapshot of where we stand now, and what to expect in a possible second wave of infection. They can also shed light on the potential immunity status of vulnerable populations such as Indigenous communities, and residents of nursing homes and long-term care facilities.

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- Serological surveys can also help guide important public health decisions once a vaccine becomes available.

If pressed on serological tests:

- A serological test is a blood test. This test detects the presence of virus-specific antibodies in blood samples and tells us whether a person has been previously exposed to the virus that causes COVID-19.
- Developing and implementing a validated and effective serological test for COVID-19 has its challenges. This is an emerging virus, and little is understood about the body's immune reaction to it at this time. Further research is needed.
- The Public Health Agency of Canada's National Microbiology Laboratory is evaluating a variety of commercial tests for COVID-19.
- On March 18, the Minister of Health signed an Interim Order to allow expedited access to COVID-19-related medical devices for use by healthcare providers. Health Canada is responsible for the review of applications under the interim Order, including those for commercial serological tests, and authorizes medical devices that meet safety and effectiveness requirements.
- Only diagnostic tests authorized by Health Canada can be imported or sold in Canada. Unauthorized tests may not produce accurate results, leading to potential misdiagnosis. Health Canada has confirmed that authorized COVID-19 tests are well supported by evidence indicating they will provide accurate and reliable results. As of April 9, 2020, Health Canada has not approved any serological tests.
- A serological test detects the presence of virus-specific antibodies in patients' blood and allows public health professionals to identify individuals who have been infected by the COVID-19 virus.
- The ability to test for antibodies provides a deeper understanding of how the immune system responds to the virus that causes COVID-19. It also provides a tool to assess new vaccines and other therapeutics or treatments.
- Poor performances of rapid serological tests for diagnosing COVID-19 infections have been reported by jurisdictions in Europe. Use of a diagnostic test that produces false or inaccurate results can put individuals and the Canadian population at risk. Canada is being vigilant to ensure that serological testing is used appropriately, in conjunction with other tools to diagnose infection.

If pressed on why Canada is not following the UK and Germany:

- More research is needed before making decisions in Canada.
- Other respiratory viruses generally do not provide an individual with 100% immunity after recovery.

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- Right now, we just do not know if individuals who have recovered from COVID-19 will have immunity, how long that immunity may last, or if it's possible for individuals to experience less severe or potentially more serious illness if they get COVID-19 a second time.
- Canada will continue working closely with international partners to share information on measures and best practices to inform our domestic approaches.

On pre-symptomatic and asymptomatic transmission

- Now that more countries have had large numbers of cases and have analysed transmission patterns, recent studies provide evidence that transmission of the virus can happen from infected people—before they develop symptoms. We refer to this as pre-symptomatic transmission.
- There is also evidence that some infected people who never develop symptoms are also able to transmit the virus. This is called asymptomatic transmission.
- We do not know how much of a role pre-symptomatic and asymptomatic transmission play in driving this epidemic at this time—but we know that it is occurring among those with close contact or in close physical settings.
- While the primary driver of the global pandemic of COVID-19 has been individuals with visible symptoms (coughing and respiratory droplets are key ways the virus is spread), evidence of asymptomatic or pre-symptomatic transmission points to the importance of everyone, even those who feel fine, following the proven methods of preventing transmission.

Drugs and vaccines

- When a vaccine or drug is developed to prevent or treat COVID-19, we will take appropriate action to ensure its availability to Canadians.
- Measures include fast-tracking through the:
 - scientific review of new drugs or vaccines through a priority review or a notice of compliance with conditions
 - use of the Extraordinary Use of New Drugs pathway for making a promising new drug or vaccine available in order to secure the health of Canadians during an emergency
 - Canadian clinical trials for new vaccines, new or repurposed antivirals, or supportive therapies
- Other measures include the:
 - Special Access Program for practitioners treating patients with serious or life-threatening conditions when conventional therapies have failed or are unavailable
 - importation of a new drug authorized for sale in the United States, Switzerland or the European Union through the list of drugs for an urgent public health need.

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Canadian hospitals to join global drug trials

- COVID-19 is a global pandemic that requires a global solution.
- The participation of countries, including Canada in this unprecedented mega-trial to test potential treatments for COVID-19, is truly a new model for global collaboration.
- This global trial coordinated by the World Health Organization will test multiple potential drugs to treat COVID-19. By using a common study design across countries, it ensures that results can be obtained more rapidly and be more robust.
- As with any unproven therapy, there are potential harms as well as benefits. Therefore, all potential therapies are best accessed through a clinical trial.
- The Government of Canada has invested nearly \$1 million through the Canadian Institutes of Health Research to support the Canadian portion of this global trial. This is part of our \$275 million commitment towards supporting medical research for the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Canada is home to some of the most skilled and brightest researchers in the world who are working hard to support international efforts to fight this pandemic. The Canadian portion of this global trial plans to recruit up to 20 sites across Canada.
- To help advance research and vaccine development for COVID-19, the World Health Organization, along with the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations, is coordinating an international collaboration in which Canada is participating.

Experimental Therapies

- Every drug or health product making a therapeutic claim sold or marketed in Canada needs to be approved by Health Canada for safety, efficacy and quality. This approval process starts with manufacturers filing a submission of a drug or health product with Health Canada.
- To provide Canadians with the fastest access possible to health products related to COVID-19, Health Canada is expediting the review of any COVID-19 related submissions.
- Currently there are no drugs specifically authorized to treat or prevent COVID-19. For drugs that show an early promise in treating COVID-19, the best way to access therapies is through clinical trials.
- Health Canada encourages health care professionals prescribing or using experimental therapies for COVID-19 patients to contact the Department to initiate a clinical trial.
- The Department continues to monitor the safety and effectiveness of drugs and health products once they are on the market.

If pressed on accelerating access to treatments:

- Health Canada recognizes that Canadians want faster access to new and promising drugs and health products, particularly when limited treatment options are available.
- As an emergency public health measure, the Minister of Health has signed Interim Orders to allow expedited access to COVID-19-related medical devices and drugs.

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- Health Canada will continue to use all tools at its disposal to expedite the supply of safe and effective health products related to COVID-19.

If pressed on off-label use:

Additional context: Some healthcare providers are prescribing drugs “off-label” to help treat COVID-19 symptoms. This means they are prescribing drugs that are authorized and labelled to address other medical conditions to treat COVID-19.

- In Canada, a health care professional's decision to prescribe or use a particular drug for a labelled or off-label indication is part of the practice of medicine, which falls under the jurisdiction of provincial and territorial professional regulatory authorities.
- While Health Canada regulates the sale of drugs in Canada, it is the responsibility of health care professionals to consider information from the Canadian Product Monograph, approved product labels and other credible references such as medical journals, case reports, peer-reviewed studies, and medical practice experience to ensure that the potential benefit of a drug outweighs the risk for each patient.
- An off-label use may not be supported by the same level of scientific evidence as an authorized use. The justification for off-label prescribing can range from rigorous clinical studies to anecdotal evidence without substantial scientific validation.
- The product's label is designed to support the authorized use and therefore may not provide all the necessary information for safe and effective off-label use. This means there may be less information available regarding potential drug interactions and other adverse reactions that could occur with off-label uses.
- It is illegal to directly or indirectly advertise either experimental therapies or the off-label use of, authorized drugs.
- Health Canada encourages health care professionals to study the off-label use of drugs for COVID-19 in the context of a clinical trial, so that data can be collected and used to inform future prescribing practices.

If pressed on clinical trials:

- Clinical trials play an essential role in advancing research and the evaluation of investigational products to help respond to emerging health issues.
- Clinical trials are conducted to investigate whether the use of a drug or a medical device is safe and effective for human use.
- A clinical trial requires the informed consent of patients and puts in place oversight and safeguards to protect the people who take part in clinical trials.
- Clinical trials enable the healthcare community to systematically collect information on the effectiveness of the treatment and potential associated risks so that the results can help treatment decisions for other patients.

Hydroxychloroquine and azithromycin for the treatment of COVID-19

- Canadians and their families who are ill with COVID-19 need access to safe and effective drugs and to health products for diagnosis and treatment.

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- There has been some preliminary evidence from studies suggesting that hydroxychloroquine alone, or in combination with azithromycin, may be effective in reducing the viral load in patients with COVID-19, as well as in treating respiratory tract infections related to COVID-19.
- Evidence on the effectiveness of using hydroxychloroquine and azithromycin in combination to treat COVID-19 is still very limited, and like all medications, both drugs are associated with known risks.
- Both hydroxychloroquine and azithromycin have been approved in Canada for the treatment of other diseases. A Healthcare practitioner may choose to use these medications off-label based on his/her patient's needs, including the seriousness of the patient's illness, if the potential benefits outweigh the known risks of the drugs.
- Hydroxychloroquine is approved for the treatment of lupus, rheumatoid arthritis and malaria.
- Azithromycin is an antibiotic used in the treatment of pneumonia and other bacterial infections.
- It is important to preserve the supply of medications for patients who need them for approved indications.
- As the use of these medications to treat COVID-19 is in its early experimental stage, Health Canada recommends that healthcare practitioners prescribing these therapies for COVID-19 patients do so through a clinical trial.
- A clinical trial requires the informed consent of patients and would enable the healthcare community to systematically collect information about the risks and benefits of the treatment.
- All clinical trials related to the treatment of COVID-19 are being reviewed on a priority basis. Companies, clinicians, or researchers seeking to initiate a clinical trial should contact Health Canada.

If pressed on the National Emergency Strategic Stockpile

- The Government of Canada is adding hydroxychloroquine to Canada's National Emergency Strategic Stockpile (NESS). Supplies will be used first for approved indications, and then for clinical trials related to COVID-19.
- The addition of hydroxychloroquine to the NESS will be made over a period of several months, to minimize the impact on supply for approved indications.
- The NESS contains supplies that provinces and territories can request in emergencies, such as infectious disease outbreaks, natural disasters, and other public health events, when their own resources are not enough.
- The stockpile includes a variety of items such as medical equipment, pharmaceuticals, and beds and blankets.
- The purpose of the NESS is to help supplement provincial and territorial resources during a rare or high-impact public health event.
- The NESS is not intended to replace supplies that provinces and territories hold or procure. Provinces and territories are responsible for preparing and maintaining their own supply capacities.

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- In January, the Public Health Agency of Canada began monitoring the coronavirus outbreak in China and started assessing its NESS inventories and procuring supplies needed to respond to a possible outbreak in Canada.
- Globally, we have seen a tightening of supply. The federal government is continuing to work aggressively to secure necessary supplies in real time, in direct collaboration with all provinces and territories.

If pressed on the availability of hydroxychloroquine and azithromycin:

- Health Canada is closely monitoring the supply of potential treatments for COVID-19 in Canada, including hydroxychloroquine and azithromycin.
- There are four companies that currently market hydroxychloroquine in Canada: Apotex Inc., JAMP Pharma Corporation, Mint Pharmaceuticals Inc., and Sanofi-Aventis Canada Inc. Health Canada understands that all four companies are experiencing increased demand. A
- There are 16 companies that currently market azithromycin in Canada: Altamed Pharma, Angita Pharma Inc., Apotex Inc., Auro Pharma Inc., Dominion Pharmacal, JAMP Pharma Corporation, Laboratoire Riva Inc., Marcan Pharmaceuticals Inc, Pharmascience Inc., Pro Doc Limitee, Sandoz Canada Incorporated, Sanis Health Inc., Sivem Pharmaceuticals ULC, Sterimax Inc., Teva Canada Incorporated and Pfizer Canada ULC. None of these companies are reporting shortages of azithromycin in Canada.

If pressed on Health Canada actions to mitigate shortages linked to COVID-19:

- Health Canada is actively monitoring the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the supply of drugs in Canada. This includes proactively looking at the Canadian supply chain to identify areas where supply may be vulnerable and addressing those vulnerabilities before shortages develop.
- The Department has also increased surveillance efforts and is regularly engaging provinces and territories, industry, healthcare and patient groups—in some cases on a daily basis. Health Canada is also working with international regulatory partners, including the European Medicines Agency, the United States Food and Drug Administration, the Australian Therapeutic Goods Administration, and the World Health Organization to share information on any signs of global supply disruptions. This engagement has enabled us to better identify early shortage signals, potential mitigation strategies, and to coordinate responses.
- As part of the whole-of-government response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the COVID-19 Emergency Response Act was passed on March 25. The amendments to the *Food and Drugs Act* enable Health Canada to put in place more robust tools to support efforts to alleviate shortages that occur and prevent shortages from happening when possible.
- On March 30, the Minister of Health signed an Interim Order permitting the exceptional importation and sale of drugs, medical devices, and foods for a special dietary purpose needed to prevent or alleviate the effects of shortages directly or indirectly related to COVID-19.
- The Interim Order permits the exceptional importation of specified drugs that may not fully meet Canadian regulatory requirements, such as bilingual labelling, but are manufactured according to comparable standards to safeguard the Canadian drug supply and protect the health of Canadians during this time.

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- Only drugs included on the List of Drugs for Exceptional Importation and Sale will be eligible for the exceptional importation and sale provisions in the Interim Order. At this time, the list will only include drugs that have been designated as Tier 3 shortages, such as hydroxychloroquine.
- While there are no drugs currently on this list, Health Canada will consider proposals from companies to access Tier 3 shortage drugs, including hydroxychloroquine, under this new pathway and update the list as appropriate.
- Health Canada will continue to work with other federal departments, provincial, and territorial governments, international partners, and industry so that Canadians have access to the drugs and medical devices they need during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Supplies and medical devices

Canada's supply of PPE and medical supplies

- We are aware of the shortage of personal protective equipment (PPE) and medical supplies across Canada and are committed to doing what is necessary to protect the health of Canadians, especially frontline healthcare workers, from COVID-19.
- The Government of Canada is coordinating with provincial and territorial governments to quickly assess needs for PPE items such as N95 respirators, surgical masks, face shields, nitrile gloves, gowns and other protective clothing, as well as medical supplies such as sanitizer, ventilators, swabs and testing kits.
- To meet these needs, we are purchasing large quantities of equipment and supplies, working with Canadian companies to increase their manufacturing capacity to produce additional supplies, and investing in COVID-19 testing.
- We have also received donations from international and domestic organizations.
- Canada is working to rapidly allocate PPE and medical supplies to the provinces and territories as per an approach agreed upon by federal-provincial-territorial (FPT) Ministers of Health.
- The Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) is also deploying PPE and ventilators from its National Emergency Strategic Stockpile (NESS) to provinces and territories submitting requests for assistance.
- Canada's NESS contains supplies that provinces and territories can request in emergencies, such as infectious disease outbreaks. The purpose of the NESS is to help supplement provincial and territorial resources through the provision of surge support.
- Provinces and territories are responsible for preparing and maintaining their own supply capacities.

Regulatory Measures to improve access to medical devices including PPE

- To support the Government wide response to COVID-19, in recent weeks we have:
 - allowed expedited access to COVID-19-related medical devices such as test kits.
 - expedited licensing of establishment and product licences.

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- addressed shortages by permitting the importation and sale of medical devices that are not approved in Canada, subject to certain requirements.
 - facilitated access to products that may not fully meet current regulatory requirements, such as bilingual labelling, including personal protective equipment (such as masks and gowns), swabs, hand sanitizers, and hard-surface disinfectants.
 - amended the *Food and Drugs Act* and the *Patent Act* to support efforts to help prevent and alleviate shortages.
- Health Canada will monitor and assess the safety, quality, and efficacy of all products allowed for import and sale under these special measures.

Procurement contracts to increase supplies in Canada

- Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada and Public Services and Procurement Canada continue to galvanize Canadian industries to increase domestic manufacturing capacity, including re-tooling facilities to produce equipment and supplies including portable ventilators, surgical masks, and rapid testing kits.
- Through these efforts, the Government of Canada has signed new procurement agreements with Canadian companies such as Thornhill Medical, Medicom, and Spartan Bioscience.
- The Government has also signed letters of intent with companies such as Precision Biomonitoring, Fluid Energy Group Ltd., Irving Oil, Calko Group, and Stanfield's to produce test kits, hand sanitizer, and protective apparel, including masks and gowns.
- Canada Goose received its medical device establishment licence from Health Canada to proceed with the retooling of its manufacturing facility to enable it to make gowns.
- Throughout this process, PHAC, Health Canada and National Research Canada are playing a critical role, conducting technical reviews to verify that the products meet the Government of Canada technical specifications for COVID-19 as available on the Public Services and Procurement Canada's [buy and sell website](#).
- The Government of Canada has also awarded a contract to Amazon to manage the logistics of distributing PPE and supplies to support the COVID-19 response.
- Amazon will work directly with Canada Post to provide warehousing, and leverage its current third-party delivery channels, through Canada Post and Purolator, to deliver the products to provincial and territorial health authorities, across the country, for the frontline healthcare response.

Invitation to Submit an Expression of Interest for Logistics Services

- The Government of Canada is working hard to procure and deliver personal protective equipment (PPE) for front-line health care workers across Canada.
- To support these efforts, the Government of Canada is soliciting interest from companies to provide logistics services to help receive and distribute an extraordinary volume of orders of PPE across Canada in a timely manner.

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- This new expression of interest relates to an end-to-end logistics solution that is different than what the existing Amazon agreement provides for. It includes warehousing, customs documentation and brokerage, and inventory management.
- PHAC will continue to maintain oversight on the amounts of PPE and supplies available, which provinces and territories are requesting them, and where they are being shipped.

Procured and Donations of PPE

- Personal protective equipment and medical supplies received by the Government of Canada, whether donated or procured, is verified by PHAC that it meets the Government of Canada technical specifications for COVID-19 as available on Public Services and Procurement Canada's buy and sell website.
- The process for verification varies depending on the medical device. For example, KN95 respirators, as an accepted alternative to N95 respirators, are visually inspected to verify for defects in design and construction, and tested to assess that flow rate, pressure drop and penetration meet specifications for filtering face pieces. Gowns are visually inspected and tested for fluid penetration.
- Recognizing that some of the supplies might not be familiar to our healthcare providers, items that meet the appropriate technical specifications will be deployed to provinces and territories with accompanying documentation that confirms that the products meet specifications and offers instructions for use.
- For example, items received from China might have labeling in Mandarin. To ensure rapid deployment, PHAC is not able to re-label each individual item. To that end, provinces and territories are advised to follow the PHAC instructions provided with the supplies, conducting the appropriate training with frontline healthcare workers.
- Another example is the KN95 mask. Normal procedure for an N95 mask is to conduct a fit test; however, the KN95 cannot be tested this way; therefore, PHAC will be instructing provinces and territories to conduct facefit testing. This process may be unfamiliar to healthcare workers; therefore, instructions will be provided.
- The Government of Canada appreciates the donations of PPE generously provided by international and domestic organizations, including the Jack Ma Foundation/Alibaba, Home Depot, Apple, CBC/Radio-Canada, Shell, AstraZeneca, and many others.
- We are pleased to see so many Canadians stepping up and lending support to those who need it most.

Coordinated Government of Canada response to purchasing equipment and supplies

- The Government of Canada is leading a coordinated approach to provide needed supplies and equipment across the country:
 - **Public Services and Procurement Canada:** PSPC is leveraging existing supply arrangements, as well as engaging with the broader domestic and international supply communities to identify and purchase required products.

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- The department is asking all suppliers to come forward with products and/or services they could offer to support Canada's response.
- **Public Health Agency of Canada:** PHAC is leading collaboration with federal partners, provinces and territories to identify needs and requirements for the COVID-19 response. The Agency is also overseeing Canada's National Emergency Strategic Stockpile, which contains supplies that provinces and territories can request for surge support.
- **Health Canada:** As the regulatory body for health products, Health Canada is expediting access to the health products Canadians need to help limit the spread of COVID-19.
 - On March 18, the Minister of Health signed an Interim Order to allow expedited access to COVID-19-related medical devices. Health Canada also introduced an interim measure to facilitate access to certain products, such as PPE.
 - Under the Interim Order, a medical device licence or authorization is needed to sell and import higher risk medical devices to Canada.
 - Health Canada will review all COVID-19-related submissions and applications as quickly as possible while maintaining standards for patient safety.
- **Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada: ISED** is leading Canada's Plan to Mobilize Industry to fight COVID-19 by introducing new measures to directly support businesses to rapidly scale up production or re-tool their manufacturing lines to develop products made in Canada that will help in the fight against COVID-19. On March 20, ISED issued a call to action for manufacturers and business.
- **National Research Council of Canada:** The NRC's Industrial Research Assistance Program is building on its existing relationships with thousands of Canada's most innovative small and medium-sized businesses to issue challenges to the marketplace for innovative solutions to fight COVID-19.

Re-Use of Single-Use Medical Devices

- As with other hospital-based practices, the purchase and use of reprocessed devices by individual healthcare facilities falls under provincial and territorial jurisdiction.
- Given shortages of some critical medical devices due to COVID-19, Health Canada is working on guidance for the cleaning and sterilization of single-use devices.
- Additional urgent measures have also been taken by the Government of Canada in the last few weeks to support access to new COVID-19 diagnostic tests and hand sanitizers, disinfectants, personal protective equipment, and swabs for diagnosis.

N95 Masks – Decontaminating and Reuse

- The N95 masks used by healthcare workers are labelled as single-use products.

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- The Government of Canada, like many other countries, is looking at ways to extend the use of personal protective equipment (PPE), such as N95 masks, through decontamination as a way of helping Canada meet its supply needs.
- The Government of Canada has asked provinces and territories, as well as healthcare providers, to keep their used N95 masks and store the masks according to their local biosafety standards and guidelines while we verify processes for successful mask decontamination.
- Health Canada has already authorized certain machines to decontaminate N95 masks under the Interim Order for Medical Devices. Products and manufacturing processes must meet the requirements for safety, quality and effectiveness to protect the health and safety of Canadians.
- The Government of Canada has procured decontamination units to increase provincial and territorial capacity to reprocess N95 masks, if needed.
- Other countries, including the United States, have taken this approach.
- The Government of Canada is working hard to get PPE and medical supplies to healthcare workers through bulk procurement in collaboration with the provinces and territories, ramping up domestic production capacity, and identifying potential alternatives and ways to extend product life.

On the Public Health Agency of Canada's Procurement of Decontamination of Devices for the Reprocessing of Single Use N95 Respirators during the COVID-19 Response

- The Government of Canada put in place a contract with Stryker Canada, on April 15, 2020, to procure 82 decontamination devices.
- These units will provide a total additional national capacity to reprocess approximately 275,500 N95 respirators a week.
- These devices are the result of Canadian research and development efforts and are manufactured in Canada.
- The Government of Canada continues to work closely with all provinces and territories on their potential needs for additional decontamination and reprocessing capacity.
- The National Research Council has purchased 20 Clean Flow Healthcare Mini medical devices to share with hospitals to study mask decontamination.

On Health Canada's Considerations for the Reprocessing of Single Use N95 Respirators during the COVID-19 Response

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- The Government of Canada recognizes that reprocessing masks is a potential solution that would provide an additional supply of masks for healthcare workers who rely on them for protection.
- Because of potential shortages of PPE during the COVID-19 response, the Government of Canada continues to work with manufacturers to identify additional technologies that enable effective decontamination of single use N95 respirators, which would allow their safe reuse by frontline healthcare professionals.
- Decontamination is an acceptable way to make the masks safe for reuse. Companies are required to provide evidence that demonstrates their processes are capable of adequate decontamination for reuse.
- Health Canada has posted a [notice](#) to inform manufacturers of important regulatory requirements that would need to be considered to demonstrate that their decontamination methods for single use N95 respirators would meet key safety and effectiveness requirements.
- A [notice](#) with important considerations for healthcare professionals has also been posted that provides further information about Health Canada's evidence requirements ensuring that products and manufacturing processes meet the standards required for safety, quality and effectiveness.
- Manufacturers wishing to reprocess medical devices for use for COVID-19 can apply for expedited authorizations under the March 18, 2020 [Interim Order](#)—a streamlined regulatory process to respond to the health crisis.
- There are two approaches that may be taken:
 - companies may provide sterilization or decontamination devices or systems to healthcare facilities for use in reprocessing single use N95 respirators, or
 - companies may themselves reprocess and redistribute single-use N95 respirators to healthcare facilities.
- Healthcare facilities with sterilizers capable of reprocessing N95 respirators in house do not require Health Canada authorization to conduct the activity. However, Health Canada highly recommends that healthcare facilities use only technologies that have been authorized by Health Canada.
- The Government of Canada continues to engage with the healthcare community, and provinces and territories to monitor the supply of PPE, as well as options for reprocessing N95 masks.
- Our goal is to identify options quickly and to effectively address the healthcare community's critical need for safe and effective PPE.

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Authorizations under the Interim Order for Medical Devices

- Health Canada has invited applications from medical device companies with extensive experience manufacturing the equipment used in decontamination and reprocessing to authorize these technologies to safely and effectively reprocess N95 respirators and other PPE. As with all COVID-19-related products, Health Canada is expediting applications for these products and making them our top priority.
- Under the Interim Order for Medical Devices ([link](#)), Health Canada has authorized expanding the intended use of sterilizers and authorized new devices to reprocess N95 respirators.
- A list of the authorized devices is available [here](#) (look for “sterilizer” or “decontamination” under the “technology” column). This list will be updated regularly as devices receive authorization.
- Health Canada will continue to monitor current international trends and assess the evidence supporting various decontamination and sterilization methods/strategies for the reprocessing of other PPE such as single use surgical masks in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

On existing guidance

- In May 2016, Health Canada published a [notice](#) to industry on re-use of single-use medical devices.
- Companies that reprocess and distribute medical devices originally authorized and labelled for single use to Canadian healthcare facilities will be held to the same Health Canada requirements as manufacturers of new devices.
- Each manufacturer of an authorized sterilizer or decontamination device has their own guidelines to provide details to users on how to operate it for the purpose of decontaminating respirators, including:
 - Instructions for healthcare facilities;
 - Instructions for healthcare personnel; and
 - N95 decontamination fact sheet.
- A [notice](#) with important considerations for healthcare professionals has also been posted that provides further information about Health Canada's evidence requirements ensuring that products and manufacturing processes meet the standards required for safety, quality and effectiveness.

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On the Report to the Chief Science Advisor of Canada: Task Force on N95 Face Masks Reprocessing

- Experts from PHAC and Health Canada were among the members of the Task Force that examined available evidence on reprocessing and re-use of N95 face masks (also referred to as N95 respirators or respirators) in light of potential shortages of these devices.
- The Task Force conducted an expedited review of options for mask reprocessing using ultraviolet light, heat/microwave and chemicals such as hydrogen peroxide.
- The recommendations made in this report are in line with the current practices and plans supported by PHAC and Health Canada.
- Since the report was submitted, Health Canada has approved additional technologies for reprocessing. The Department continues to assess all technologies related to COVID-19 in an expedited manner.

Legislative Amendments

- To assist in Canada's response to COVID-19, these new legislative amendments will give the Minister of Health new powers to:
 - make regulations to help prevent or alleviate shortages of drugs and medical devices;
 - seek additional information from companies who produce food, drugs, cosmetics or medical devices to assess the risks and benefits of the new products, and to confirm that these products are safe for Canadians; and
 - seek authorization for third-party manufacturers to supply needed patented inventions, such as a medication or medical equipment, to the extent needed to address this pandemic.
- These measures received Royal Assent on March 25, 2020, and took effect immediately.
- The amendments to the Food and Drug Act and the Commissioner of Patents' ability to issue authorizations will remain in place until September 30, 2020.
- Health Canada is committed to taking necessary action to continue to protect the health and safety of Canadians during this pandemic and will take any necessary actions in collaboration with the provinces and territories and other stakeholders to help protect the supply of needed medications and medical devices in Canada.

On how these changes work with the Protecting Canadians from Unsafe Drugs Act (Vanessa's Law):

- These amendments complement the powers received through Vanessa's Law by:
 - Providing the authority to gather additional safety information to inform decisions about new products being brought on to the Canadian market or that are already on the market; and

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- expanding the scope of powers to other potential new products, including cosmetics and foods for special dietary purposes that may be needed to help address shortages during this pandemic.

Temporary exemption under the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act for medical treatments

- Many people with substance use disorder or who live with chronic pain may find it challenging to effectively practice physical distancing without changes to prescribing and dispensing practices. In this time of emergency measures, we must do everything we can to allow them to access the medicine they need.
- Health Canada is working with provinces and territories to take action to help patients and practitioners reduce their social interactions, without limiting access to critical medicine.
- On March 19, 2020, Health Canada issued a six-month national exemption for prescriptions of controlled substances (such as narcotics) under the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act and its regulations. This exemption temporarily authorizes pharmacists to prescribe, sell or provide controlled substances in limited circumstances, or to transfer prescriptions for controlled substances.
- As permitted by the laws and regulations of the province or territory in which the pharmacist is entitled to practice, this exemption will:
 - Permit pharmacists to extend and renew prescriptions;
 - Permit pharmacists to transfer prescriptions to other pharmacists; and
 - Allow pharmacy employees to deliver controlled substances to patients' homes or wherever they may be.
- To accommodate physical distancing, and to reduce the stress on emergency rooms and healthcare practitioners across Canada during the COVID-19 pandemic, the exemption also permits prescribers, including nurse practitioners, to temporarily issue verbal orders (i.e., over the phone) to extend or refill a prescription.
- The exemption will be in effect until September 30, 2020, but can be extended or ended earlier by Health Canada if required.
- Legislative or regulatory changes may be required in some provinces and territories in order to put in place these new activities for pharmacists and nurse practitioners. Health Canada recommends contacting your pharmacist or provincial or territorial regulatory authority to check when and if these activities are available in your area.
- The Government of Canada will continue to collaborate with our provincial and territorial partners to effectively implement the exemption, and to assess any additional barriers to Canadians' access to controlled substances for medical reasons during the pandemic.
- Health Canada issued a similar exemption during the Newfoundland and Labrador's 2020 snowstorm.

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Interim Order Respecting Drugs, Medical Devices and Foods for a Special Dietary Purpose in relation to COVID-19

- The current COVID-19 pandemic is having a major impact on Canadians and on the health care system. It is critical to ensure the Government of Canada can effectively respond to the needs of those affected.
- In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Minister of Health has signed an Interim Order to help prevent and alleviate shortages—of drugs, medical devices, and foods for a special dietary purpose—resulting directly or indirectly from the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The provision will allow products that are not approved in Canada to be imported and sold in Canada effective immediately, subject to certain requirements.
- As with all drugs and medical devices, Health Canada will assess and monitor the safety, quality, and effectiveness of all products allowed for import and sale under this Interim Order. Drug and medical device manufacturers will be required to follow strict monitoring requirements.
- The Interim Order will also require companies manufacturing and importing critical medical devices during the COVID-19 pandemic to report actual or anticipated shortages, similar to what is currently required for drugs. This will help the health system to plan and reallocate supplies as needed to help ensure continued access for Canadians.
- In addition, the Interim Order will enable faster market access for hard surface disinfectants and certain hand sanitizers.
- Together, these actions will support access to the drugs, medical devices, and foods for a special dietary purpose that Canadians need to stay healthy and safe, and help those who are ill to recover.

Interim Order Respecting COVID-19-related Medical Devices

- Early diagnosis is critical to slowing and reducing the spread of COVID-19 in Canada.
- As an emergency public health measure, the Minister of Health has signed an Interim Order to allow expedited access to COVID-19-related medical devices.
- With the Interim Order, two new diagnostic tests are made readily accessible in Canada:
 - the Roche Molecular Systems Inc. cobas SARS-CoV-2 diagnostic device; and
 - the ThermoFisher Scientific TaqPath™ COVID-19 Combo Kit
- An Interim Order is one of the fastest mechanisms available to the Government of Canada to help make health products available to help address larger-scale, public health emergency situations.

If pressed on the US directive to allow unauthorized health products:

- Health Canada will continue to use all tools at its disposal to expedite supply of safe and effective health products related to COVID-19. However, the department is not

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providing blanket approval of unauthorized drugs or devices. We will update Canadians with any new information as it arises.

- The Interim Order will also ensure that other COVID-19-related medical devices are available to treat, mitigate, or prevent COVID-19, as necessary.

If pressed on Cost Recovery:

- To remove impediments for manufacturers in this time of public health need, Health Canada will waive all application fees for COVID-19 medical devices subject to this Interim Order.

Border measures

- The Government of Canada continues to introduce border measures to limit the introduction and spread of COVID-19.
- The Government of Canada has multiple systems in place to prepare for, detect and limit the spread of infectious disease, including COVID-19, in Canada.
- The Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) is working closely with the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) to help prevent the spread of 2019 novel coronavirus into Canada at all international ports of entry.
- PHAC is responsible for advising the CBSA of any required enhanced measures to be implemented at the Canadian border to help prevent the spread of serious infectious diseases into Canada.
- Canadian citizens, permanent residents and Registered Indians under the *Indian Act* continue to enter Canada by right, and are subject to COVID-19 entry screening measures.
- To protect Canadians and to ease the potential burden non-essential travellers could place on our health care system and its frontline workers, the CBSA has implemented new travel restrictions across all ports of entry in all modes of transportation – land, sea, air and rail.
- A travel ban is currently in place for most people entering Canada*, including:
 - All foreign nationals entering Canada by air;
 - All travellers from the U.S., across all modes, for recreation and/or tourism purposes;
 - Foreign nationals entering Canada if they arrive from a foreign country other than the United States, with some exceptions, including temporary foreign workers and international students; and,
 - Foreign nationals entering from the U.S. with signs or symptoms of respiratory illness.

**There are exceptions to these bans that are spelled out in the Orders in Council.*

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- Canada and the US have also entered into a reciprocal arrangement to direct back all asylum seekers. Exceptions may be made for unique circumstances, such as an unaccompanied minor.
- All persons entering Canada – no matter their country of origin or mode of entry - are REQUIRED to self-isolate for 14 days.
- There are exemptions in place on mandatory self-isolation to ensure that critical infrastructure, essential services and economic supply chains continue between Canada and the USA. Workers who are critical to our economy and infrastructure will be permitted to enter Canada, including truck drivers, firefighters and medical workers.
- Cross-border supply chains are vital to ensure the continued flow of goods, including food and medical supplies for all Canadians. As such, the CBSA is working with other federal partners to share information with commercial stakeholders to provide assurances that commercial traffic is not impeded.

ArriveCAN Mobile Application

- Emergency Orders implemented under the *Quarantine Act* require all individuals who enter Canada to quarantine (self-isolate) or isolate themselves for 14 days.
- To ensure compliance with the Order, all travellers entering Canada are required to provide basic contact information to the Government of Canada upon entry. This also includes a self-assessment of symptoms and confirmation on whether a quarantine plan has been considered by each incoming traveller.
- Currently, this information is collected using a paper or online form (“Coronavirus Form”) upon entry into Canada.
- The ArriveCAN App, launched during the week of April 29, will be an alternative to paper forms. It will enable faster processing at the border for travellers returning to Canada, and we encourage travellers to use it.
- The ArriveCAN App allows travellers to input their information quickly, easily and securely upon arrival in Canada. The App works by digitizing the information collected under the Coronavirus Form.
- This electronic collection method also limits physical contact between travellers and Border Services Officers and Quarantine Officers. This helps to protect both the travellers and the officers.
- The App captures information requested under the Coronavirus Form in much the same way as the paper and the online form.
- Additional information is now required, such as flight or border crossing information, and there is a new question on whether travellers are exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19 and whether they have a quarantine plan.
- Personal information collected by Border Services Officers and Quarantine Officers, either via the paper form, the online form or the App, will be used by the Public Health Agency of Canada

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to verify travellers' compliance with the *Quarantine Act*. Information will be shared with provinces and territories, as well as with law enforcement, to monitor and enforce compliance with the Order.

- The protection of Canadians' personal information is a priority for the Government of Canada, and any tool used to collect personal information undergoes a rigorous privacy assessment.
- Personal information is used to administer and enforce the *Minimizing the Risk of Exposure to COVID-19 in Canada Order (Mandatory Isolation)*, No. 2 authorized under the *Quarantine Act* and/or *Department of Health Act*. Personal information may be used and/or disclosed for the following purposes: (1) to monitor, verify and/or enforce compliance with the Mandatory Isolation Order, (2) to provide the traveller with information to promote compliance with the Mandatory Isolation Order, and (3) for public health follow-up.
- The *Privacy Act* and its regulations require CBSA and PHAC to retain personal information under their control. Personal information used for an administrative purpose, as is the case for this App, is kept for a period of at least two years after the last time it was used.
- The ArriveCAN app supports Canada's digital strategy for services to Canadians and enhances efforts to go green.

Non-essential Travel Restriction (Canada-US)

- On March 18, 2020, the Governments of Canada and the United States announced that both countries would be implementing collaborative and reciprocal measures to suspend non-essential travel along the Canada-U.S. border in response to the spread of COVID-19.
- As of March 21 at 12:01 a.m. EDT, there is now a temporary 30-day restriction on all non-essential travel at the Canada-U.S. border, effective for an initial period of 30 days, renewable.
- All travel of an optional or discretionary nature, including tourism and recreation, is covered by these measures. Travel by healthy people who have to cross the border to go to work or for other essential purposes, such as medical care, will continue.
- Some examples of essential travel purposes are:
 - Crossing the border for work and study;
 - Economic services and supply chains;
 - Critical infrastructure support;
 - Health (immediate medical care), safety and security;
 - Shopping for essential goods such as medication or goods necessary to preserve the health and safety of an individual or family; and
 - Other activities at the discretion of the BSO.
- Canadian citizens and permanent residents and Registered Indians under the *Indian Act* enter Canada by right. They will be provided with a Public Health Agency of Canada pamphlet that advises travellers that they must self-isolate for 14 days from the date they enter Canada.

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- Canada will also implement measures at airports to:
 - strengthen health screening
 - increase presence to conduct further health screening and public outreach
 - increase signage throughout the arrivals area to encourage travellers to follow the latest public health guidance
 - prevent all travellers who have COVID-19 symptoms, regardless of their citizenship, from boarding international flights to Canada
 - airlines will conduct a basic health assessment of all air travellers based on guidance from the Public Health Agency of Canada
- This includes making information readily available and raising awareness among **all** travellers about what they should do if they develop symptoms of COVID-19. In addition, we continue to advise travellers coming from any location to self-monitor for signs and symptoms of COVID-19.
- We continue to monitor and assess the global risk of COVID-19. To keep pace with the evolving situation, our response measures are being adjusted and refined in accordance with the global risk assessment. This includes updating our travel health advisories with increased risk levels.

Order in Council 10 – Mandatory Isolation and Quarantine (self-isolation)

- The Government of Canada's top priority is the health and safety of Canadians. We are taking unprecedented action to respond to the COVID-19 epidemic. This includes continuously assessing the risks to adapt our response accordingly.
- The Government of Canada's Emergency Order under the *Quarantine Act* already requires persons entering Canada—whether by air, land or sea—to isolate for 14 days if they have symptoms of COVID-19, or to quarantine themselves for 14 days if they are asymptomatic to limit the spread of COVID-19.
- An updated Order was issued to provide clarification on terminology and is based on new scientific evidence that people without symptoms may transmit the virus.
- Under the updated Order, any traveller arriving in Canada—whether they are symptomatic or asymptomatic—cannot isolate or quarantine (respectively) in a place where they would be in contact with people who are vulnerable, such as adults aged 65 years or over and people with pre-existing medical conditions.
- In addition, every traveller will need to confirm that they have a suitable place to isolate or quarantine where they will have access to basic necessities, such as food and medication. Travellers will be expected to make plans for where they will isolate or quarantine in advance of arriving to Canada. Travellers who do not have an appropriate place in which to isolate or quarantine themselves must go to a place designated by the Chief Public Health Officer of Canada. These criteria are newly applied to asymptomatic travellers.

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- This Order is mandatory for anyone entering Canada on or after April 15, 2020.
- If a traveller is symptomatic and does not have private transportation or an adequate place to isolate, they will be required to isolate for 14 days in a place designated by the Chief Public Health Officer of Canada.
- Asymptomatic travellers are still at risk of infecting others and will be required to wear a non-medical mask or face covering (i.e. constructed to completely cover the nose and mouth without gaping, and secured to the head by ties or ear loops) to proceed to their final destination where they must quarantine for 14 days, and follow instructions provided by the public health authority specified by a screening officer or quarantine officer if they develop signs and symptoms of COVID-19. They will be provided with a mask if they do not have one.
- Symptomatic travellers are also required to wear a non-medical mask or face covering during transit to their final destination for isolation and whenever they cannot maintain a 2 metre physical distance from others.
- Asymptomatic travellers without an adequate place for quarantine will be subject to the same expectations as those who are symptomatic, and must go to a place designated by the Chief Public Officer of Health of Canada.
- Certain persons who cross the border regularly to ensure the continued flow of goods and essential services, or individuals who receive or provide other essential services to Canadians, are exempt from the requirements to quarantine if they are asymptomatic (i.e., do not have symptoms of COVID-19).
- Individuals exempt from quarantine requirements must wear a non-medical mask or face covering to proceed to their final destination. Follow arrival to their final destination, exempted persons should practise physical distancing, consider the use of a mask or face covering when they cannot maintain physical distancing of 2 metres from others, self-monitor for symptoms, stay in their place of residence as much as possible and follow the instructions of their local public health authority if they feel sick.
- We've based this decision on the latest scientific evidence and following discussions with the provinces and territories.
- These additional measures will contribute to containing the epidemic and preventing further spread of COVID-19 in Canada.
- These measures will also help protect older adults and people with pre-existing medical conditions, who are at greatest risk of severe health complications related to COVID-19.
- The Government of Canada will continue to work closely with local, provincial, territorial and international partners to limit the introduction of COVID-19.

Enforcement:

- Spot checks will be conducted by the Government of Canada to verify compliance.
- Maximum penalties include a fine of up to \$750,000 or imprisonment for six months, or both, for failure to comply with this Order.

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- A person who causes a risk of imminent death or serious bodily harm to another person while willfully or recklessly contravening the *Quarantine Act* or the regulations could be liable for a fine of up to \$1,000,000 or imprisonment of up to three years, or both.
- Amendments are being made to the *Contraventions Regulations* to make non-compliance with specific requirements under the *Quarantine Act* contraventions for which tickets can be issued.
- The fine amounts for these contraventions will range from \$275 to \$1,000. The fine amount for contraventions committed by young persons is \$100.

Designated quarantine facilities:

- Canada's Chief Public Health Officer has designated quarantine facilities (e.g., hotels) across the country, including in Vancouver, Calgary, Toronto and Montréal.
- Canada's Chief Public Health Officer has the authority to designate any place in Canada as a quarantine facility if deemed necessary to protect public health in accordance with sections 7 and 8 of the *Quarantine Act*.

Order in Council 11 – Minimizing the Risk of Exposure to COVID-19 in Canada (Prohibition of Entry into Canada from United States)

- Foreign nationals allowed entry into Canada include temporary foreign workers, some students, persons delivering urgent medical supplies and certain groups of asylum seekers including those who both arrive at a land port of entry and are eligible to make a claim pursuant to the Safe Third Country Agreement (STCA).
- All foreign nationals permitted to enter Canada are required to meet the requirements of the Emergency Orders made under the *Quarantine Act*, including mandatory quarantine for 14 days upon entering Canada except where specifically exempted. They must also follow local and provincial/territorial health emergency orders.
- Foreign nationals generally are not permitted to enter Canada if they seek to do so for optional or discretionary purposes or if they exhibit symptoms of COVID-19 coronavirus disease.
- Foreign temporary workers are required for the continued resilience of our food and supplies sectors to ensure that Canadians have access to food and essential products during this pandemic.
- Order *Minimizing the Risk of Exposure to COVID-19 in Canada Order (Prohibition of entry into Canada from the United States,)* has effect for the period beginning on April 22, 2020 until May 21, 2020.
- Amendments to these orders will ensure that Canada continues to honour its international obligations towards refugees and asylum seekers.
- These measures will help prevent the spread of disease in Canada while ensuring that essential travel and the supply chain of goods is not interrupted.

On foreign nationals seeking to make a refugee claim

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- Foreign nationals who enter Canada in between official ports of entry to make an asylum claim will continue to be directed back to the U.S., a designated safe-third country.
- Any foreign national arriving from the U.S. who presents at an official land port of entry and **meets** one of the STCA exemptions – whether symptomatic or not – is exempted from the prohibition on entry, and may enter to make a claim for refugee protection.
- Claimants who are unable to meet Canada’s mandatory quarantine/isolation requirements will be transferred to a federal location.

On enforcement of this Order

- Failure to comply with this Order is an offense under the Quarantine Act.
- Maximum penalties include a fine of up to \$750,000 or imprisonment for six months, or both. Further, a person who causes a risk of imminent death or serious bodily harm to another person while willfully or recklessly contravening this Act or the regulations could be liable for a fine of up to \$1,000,000 or imprisonment of up to three years, or both.
- In addition, amendments have been made to the Contraventions Regulations to make non-compliance with specific requirements under the *Quarantine Act* contraventions for which tickets can be issued.
- The fine amounts for these contraventions will range from \$275 to \$1,000. The fine amount for contraventions committed by young persons is \$100.

On essential travel of foreign nationals to Canada via the United States

- Essential travel will continue unimpeded. Both governments recognize the importance of preserving vital supply chains between the two countries. These supply chains ensure that food, fuel, and life-saving medicines reach people on both sides of the border.

If pressed

Foreign nationals who are permitted to enter into Canada, include:

- A person who arrived at an official land port of entry and is permitted to make a claim for refugee protection pursuant to the Safe Third Country Agreement;
- A person registered as an Indian under the *Indian Act*; and
- A person who is a protected person.

In addition, provided they seek to enter for a purpose that is not discretionary or optional and they are not exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19, foreign nationals in the following categories also would be permitted to enter into Canada.

Foreign nationals in these categories must still demonstrate they are travelling to Canada for essential purposes and must be asymptomatic.

- A person with a valid work permit or application that was approved under the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act*;

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- A person with a valid study permit who received approval under the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act* before March 18, 2020;
- A person permitted to work in Canada as a student in a health field under paragraph 186(p) of the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Regulations*;
- A person whose application for permanent residence was approved under the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act* before March 18, 2020;
- Immediate family members of Canadian citizens or of a permanent resident;
- Persons authorized by consular services for purposes of reuniting with immediate family;
- Conveyance crews (air, boat, etc.) or workers on marine vessels;
- Diplomats;
- Persons invited by Canada to assist with Canada's COVID-19 response;
- Persons on military flights or other Canadian-military support protected persons;
- French citizens who reside in Saint-Pierre-et-Miquelon and have been only in Saint-Pierre-et-Miquelon, the United States or Canada during the period of 14 days before the day on which they arrived in Canada;
- Those whose presence in Canada is in the national interest as it pertains to public safety and emergency preparedness;
- Persons providing essential services, or are essential for the movement of goods such as truck drivers and marine transportation;
- Emergency workers;
- Licensed health care professionals with proof of employment in Canada;
- Persons who enter Canada for the purpose of delivering, maintaining, or repairing medically-necessary equipment or devices;
- Persons who enter Canada for the purpose of making medical deliveries of cells, blood and blood products, tissues, organs or other body parts, that are required for patient care in Canada; and,
- Those who, in the opinion of the Chief Public Health Officer of Canada, do not pose a risk of significant harm to public health.

Screening of Canadian Travellers Returning to Canada

- As part of Canada's enhanced border measures to contain further introduction and spread of COVID-19, airlines will conduct a health check of all travellers before boarding a flight to Canada.
- The health check is based on guidance from the Public Health Agency of Canada, in line with the World Health Organization's recommendations.
- Individuals will be screened for the following symptoms by airline personnel:
 - Fever
 - Cough
 - Difficulty breathing
- If air operators observe a traveller with symptoms or if the passenger answers yes to any of the questions on the health check, they will be refused boarding for a period of 14 days or until they provide a medical certificate confirming that their symptoms are not related to the COVID-19 virus.

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- Further instructions and advice will be provided to travellers who are denied boarding advising them to follow the guidance of local public health authorities. These travellers will also be directed to the appropriate consular services.
- These measures will help protect the health of all Canadians.

On the health check

- Airline staff will be advised to maintain distance between themselves and travellers at all times, and to encourage travellers to do so as well.
- Airline staff will observe if travellers are showing symptoms of COVID-19 and will ask every traveller if they have a fever, cough or difficulty breathing.
- They will also ask if travellers have been denied boarding in the past 14 days due to a medical reason related to COVID-19.
- However, there is allowance for travellers to provide a medical certificate certifying that any symptoms they have are not related to COVID-19.
- These measures are focused on travellers, not flight crew members.

On enforcement

- Any traveller who provides false or misleading answers about their health during screening could be subject to penalty of up to \$5,000 under the *Aeronautics Act*.

Upon arriving in Canada

- All travellers assessed in the air to be symptomatic on arrival at a Canadian airport are met and escorted by border officers away from other travellers to be attended to by public health personnel.
- All persons arriving in Canada at an air, land, marine or rail border will be asked about the purpose of their visit and whether they are feeling ill or unwell. The border services officer may ask additional questions to make their determination.
- CBSA officers will observe for signs of illness and refer any traveller suspected of being ill for a further medical assessment by the Public Health Agency of Canada, regardless of how travellers respond to screening questions.
- All travellers — no matter their country of origin or mode of entry — are assessed on arrival to Canada. Entry screening is an important public health tool amongst others during periods of uncertainty and part of a multilayered government response strategy.
- CBSA officers remain vigilant and are highly trained to identify travellers seeking entry into Canada who may pose a health and safety risk.
- CBSA officers are providing symptomatic travellers with surgical masks and instructions on how to use them.

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- These measures complement routine traveller screening procedures already in place to prepare for, detect and respond to the spread of serious infectious diseases into and within Canada.
- The following questions are now being asked by all border services officers at the primary inspection line at all air, land, ferry and rail ports of entry:
 - “Do you currently have a cough, difficulty breathing, or feel you have a fever?”
 - “I/we acknowledge that I/we must self-isolate for 14 days to prevent the potential spread of COVID-19.”
- CBSA Officers not only query travellers on the state of their health, they are trained to observe visible signs of illness and will refer any traveller who they suspect of being ill, regardless of how the traveller responded to the health screening question.
- Travellers presenting symptoms consistent with COVID-19 will be referred to a PHAC staff member for further assessment.
- These travellers are provided with a kit that includes a mask and instructions.
- All travellers entering Canada are given a Public Health Agency of Canada handout with instructions to self-isolate for 14 days. Symptomatic people are given a red pamphlet, and asymptomatic people are given a green pamphlet.

Travel Health Notices

- The Public Health Agency of Canada issues travel health notices to inform Canadian travellers of an increased or unexpected potential health risk in a country or region outside of Canada.
- The travel health notices also provide information on preventative measures travellers can take to help reduce these risks.
- The following is considered when adding countries or areas to the COVID-19 affected areas list:
 - Multiple instances of spread have occurred at the community level (multiple clusters—not in definable settings such as a household);
 - Evidence of geographical spread; and
 - Whether cases can be linked to an exposure (i.e., to another case or because of travel to another country with ongoing transmission of COVID-19).
- The COVID-19 Affected Areas List on Canada.ca/coronavirus includes all countries with Travel Health Notices related to COVID-19.

Cottage Season and COVID-19

- Public health guidance has been changing but that’s because the situation is changing rapidly and we are learning more about COVID-19 everyday.

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- Based on the current evidence, we are asking Canadians to avoid all non-essential travel to limit the spread of COVID-19, especially to smaller and rural communities where the healthcare systems could be easily overwhelmed.
- That's why we are asking everyone to not to go to cottages, campgrounds or vacation properties during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Unless the property is your primary residence or within the same community as your primary residence, you should delay your stays in these areas until the situation in Canada changes.
- If you get sick, you may not be able to get the help you need. If you stop along the way to get gas or groceries, you increase your risk of exposure and, if you're asymptomatic, you may pass the virus on to others.
- An influx of people into a small community can also strain the supply of food and other essentials for local residents.
- If you need to check in on your cottage for insurance purposes, you should only make a daytrip and then return directly home.
- All Canadians must continue to do everything possible to flatten the curve and keep our friends and families healthy. This includes staying home.