



EVERGREEN MEDIA LINES

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 determined that a novel coronavirus (coronavirus disease referred to as COVID-19) was responsible for cases of pneumonia in the Wuhan outbreak.

For the 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.
- The Public Health Agency of Canada is actively monitoring the situation regarding the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) and planning for all possible scenarios based on evidence as the science of the novel coronavirus continues to emerge.
- Canada has multiple systems in place to prepare for, detect and limit the spread of infectious disease, including COVID-19, in Canada.
- This is a serious public health issue, and there is the possibility that the virus is present in countries that do not have the capacity to detect or contain it.
- The Government of Canada is collaborating with partners at all levels of government to respond to COVID-19, and to plan and prepare should the situation escalate.
- There are, however, a number of things that we can all do to stay healthy and prevent the spread of respiratory infections: Practise frequent hygiene, which includes proper hand washing and coughing and sneezing etiquette. Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces, such as toys and doorknobs.
- 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 your questions about the 2019 novel coronavirus.

Global spread and preparedness

- COVID-19 is a global issue, and there is the possibility that the virus could be present in countries that do not have the capacity to detect or contain it.
- Our response must be based on evidence as our understanding of the science of COVID-19 continues to grow.
- 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.
- From the outset, the Public Health Agency of Canada has been collaborating with public health authorities at all levels of government across the country to ensure that our preparedness and response measures are appropriate and adaptable, based on the latest science and the evolving situation.



- Our public health efforts will continue to focus on containment to delay community spread by rapidly identifying cases, meticulously tracing close contacts and using tried and true public health measures, such as isolation and physical distancing.
- In the event of community transmission, these actions will continue as long as feasible to interrupt chains of transmission in the community and to delay and reduce an outbreak where possible.
- The Public Health Agency of Canada and the Chief Public Health Officer are in close contact with the World Health Organization (WHO) and other international partners, as well as with provincial and territorial counterparts.
- A Special Advisory Committee of Canada's Chief Medical Officers of Health is in place to respond to COVID-19. This Committee will focus its attention on coordination of federal, provincial and territorial preparedness and response across Canada's health sector.
- This is a critical time, with global efforts focused on containment of the outbreak and the prevention of further spread.
- This is an evolving situation, and we will provide Canadians with new information as it becomes available.

Canada's domestic preparedness and response

- Canada has multiple systems activated and in place to prepare for, prevent, detect and respond to the spread of the 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 cooperation 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 ill.

- 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.
- Everyone must contribute to flattening the epidemic curve. We have to modify our behaviours, including personal hygiene measures, like frequent hand washing, covering our coughs, and practising physical distancing.

The Government of Canada's COVID-19 research

- Our top priority is the health and safety of Canadians.
- Canada is home to some of the world's most skilled and eminent researchers, who are working hard to support the international response to the current pandemic.
- Every day, we learn more about COVID-19 by keeping abreast of new scientific data that is being released at a rapid pace.
- To slow and ultimately stop the spread of COVID-19, we need to mobilize Canada's scientific and research community to advance research and technology development.
- That is why in March 2020, the Government of Canada announced the creation of a \$1-billion whole-of-government COVID-19 Response Fund, of which \$275 million will be used to enhance our capacity to explore antivirals, develop vaccines and fund clinical trials.
- Through the Rapid Research program of the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR), the Government of Canada invested a total of \$54.2 million to support 99 research teams from across Canada. These teams are working to develop and implement measures to rapidly detect, control and reduce the transmission of COVID-19. Their activities include research to develop a vaccine and strategies to combat stigma, misinformation and fear.
- In addition to the CIHR, funding for the Rapid Research program comes from the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada, the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, the Canada Research Coordinating Committee, the International Development Research Centre and Genome Canada. Research Manitoba, Research Nova Scotia and Alberta Innovates also made contributions.
- The report that has been released outlines critical and innovative research being conducted across Canada, including solutions and tools being developed to combat and treat COVID-19.



- The goal is to leverage the capacity and expertise of Government of Canada research institutions and make strategic investments to support and enhance the research capabilities of Canada's academic community and industry.
- Many of the funded projects involve collaborations and partnerships with the academic communities government departments and industrial sectors of other countries.
- We are working together to turn important research findings and results into action 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 National Microbiology Laboratory (NML) of the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) and ongoing support for preparedness in First Nations and Inuit communities.
- This important work will support the performance of diagnostic tests across Canada, as well as research, testing and implementation of new diagnostic tests and methods. It will also support the coordination of the procurement and distribution of reagents and laboratory supplies with provincial and territorial authorities to increase testing capacity across the country.
- PHAC's NML is improving its understanding of the epidemiology of COVID-19 across Canada, which will allow us to enhance our response. This important work includes evaluating blood tests to determine the immune status of Canadian populations and developing methods to perform them, as well as modelling to evaluate various projections that will guide actions to minimize the incidence of the virus.
- The National Research Council (NRC) Pandemic Response Challenge program will bring together Canada's top researchers from the government, academia and the private sector to develop medical countermeasures to combat COVID-19. Program members will work with Canadian health experts to identify the most pressing needs. They will target tools for the diagnosis and rapid detection of the virus, drugs and vaccines to treat and prevent the disease, and digital health solutions to help manage Canada's pandemic response.

Collaboration on vaccine development

- At the time of this document, there is no vaccine that protects against COVID-19. Research supporting the development of vaccines against COVID-19 is being conducted around the world, including in Canada, and is at various stages of completion.
- We are taking the necessary steps to ensure that Canadians have access to a vaccine or medication to prevent or treat COVID-19 once it becomes available.
- These steps include investments in the following organizations:
 - 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 (VIDO-InterVac) to strengthen VIDO-InterVac's existing expertise on coronavirus research and upgrade its manufacturing facilities to Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP) standards; to support this effort, the NML and the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) are working with VIDO-InterVac and with the National Research Council to develop and test vaccine candidates against COVID-19;
- The National Research Council of Canada (NRC) to upgrade the facilities at the Human Health Therapeutics Research Centre in Montreal to meet GMP standards. As of late spring 2020, these facilities will be available to produce clinical trial lots as soon as vaccine candidates become available.
- Health Canada is also working with vaccine developers and manufacturers to accelerate the evaluation of vaccines to prevent COVID-19. This includes support for clinical trials and preparation for expedited reviews once they are developed.
- The Government of Canada will continue to work with international health product regulators, including the European Medicines Agency, the United States Food and Drug Administration, its partners in Australia, Canada, Singapore and Switzerland, and other organizations, such as the International Coalition of Medicines Regulatory Authorities and the World Health Organization (WHO), to support and coordinate rapid regulatory action on potential vaccines and other medical countermeasures.
- The NRC is also working with several companies to develop investigational vaccines.
- Canada is participating in the multinational "SOLIDARITY" trial, coordinated by the WHO, which is testing a number of potential drugs for the control of COVID-19. Patient recruitment for the Canadian arm of this trial has already begun and is expected to take place at up to 20 sites across Canada.
- This unprecedented mega-trial of potential treatments for COVID-19 is truly a new model of global cooperation, aimed at quickly finding treatments that could reduce the number of COVID-19 victims.
- ***Working with industry to advance research and bring innovative products to market***
- The Government of Canada, through Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada and the National Research Council of Canada, is also working with industry to support research and manufacturing capabilities.
- This includes funding for the development of patient monitoring systems and home diagnostic kits.



- The Government of Canada is also providing funding to Canadian small and medium-sized businesses to help them increase their capacity to innovate and bring their ideas to market, particularly in the manufacture of personal protective equipment and sanitizing products.

Collaboration with the international research community

- The Government of Canada is contributing to the global research effort to fight COVID-19. It works with its international partners, including the WHO through its collaborating centres and its R&D Blueprint, to coordinate efforts and share data and research results to advance knowledge worldwide.
- One example is the collaboration between the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA), Defence Research and Development Canada (DRDC) and PHAC to establish the Biosafety Level 4 Zoonotic Laboratory Network (BSL4ZNet).
- This network is made up of 15 government agencies from five different countries (Canada, the United States, the United Kingdom, Germany and Australia), all responsible for regulating human, animal and zoonotic pathogens with pandemic potential.
- BSL4ZNet has been holding emergency meetings on COVID-19 since early January with its international partners to facilitate the exchange of scientific information and the communication of research capacity needs in order to intensify global efforts to combat the spread of COVID-19.
- PHAC and DRDC, in partnership with the Department of National Defence, are also members of the Medical Countermeasures Consortium, where they work with the United States, United Kingdom and Australian governments to promote collaboration in research, development and acquisition.
- The NRC, PHAC and CFIA consult regularly with the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI), one of the main international funding mechanisms for vaccine development. Canada has contributed \$54 million to CEPI, which is leading efforts to develop candidate COVID-19 vaccines for which clinical trials can take place by late spring 2020.
- CIHR's response to the COVID-19 pandemic is being informed by international partners, such as the WHO and the [Global Research Collaboration for Infectious Disease Preparedness \(Glo-PID-R\)](#).
- CIHR, in partnership with PHAC, is building on the existing Canadian Immunization Research Network (CIRN) to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. The CIRN received a direct grant of \$1 million to gather data on the symptoms of COVID-19, as



well as on potential treatments and risk factors, to inform Canada's public health response to the disease.

- Health Canada, as a member of the International Pharmaceutical Regulators Programme, is working with other international regulators to monitor the impact of COVID-19 on the global supply chain.

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.
- However, it does mean that there is already a significant impact on our healthcare system that could limit healthcare 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.

Keeping Canadians informed

COVID-19 Situational Awareness Dashboard

- On April 4, 2020, the Government of Canada launched a new Canada COVID-19 Situational Awareness Dashboard.
- In Canada, the situation is evolving rapidly, and knowledge about COVID-19 is growing by the day. Canadians need easy access to online resources to find answers to their questions about COVID-19.



- This online dashboard presents Canadians and researchers with the latest data on COVID-19 in a user-friendly format to help them gain a better understanding of how the epidemic is evolving in Canada.
- The Situational Awareness Dashboard provides an interactive overview of the number of cases and deaths in Canada, with details on the most affected populations by age group and gender, and how the epidemic is evolving over time.
- This tool does not provide any modelling or forecasts of what could happen in the coming weeks and months.
- Every day, new data are released by the provinces and territories. While the dashboard will be continually updated to reflect new data, there may be discrepancies between the number of cases across the country and in the provinces and territories: in such cases, provincial and territorial data should be considered the most recent.
- The Government of Canada will continue to work with its partners at all levels of government to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, including to ensure the early detection and management of infections to protect the health of Canadians.

Launch of the Canada COVID-19 application

- Canadians need easy access to digital tools and resources to obtain the information they need about COVID-19.
- The Canada COVID-19 mobile app gives users access to reliable sources of health information and enables them to track their COVID-19 symptoms, if any, on a daily basis.
- It allows Canadians to consult the latest updates on COVID-19 and Canada's response to the pandemic in real time and gives them personalized recommendations and resources.
- This app is based on the tools developed by the provinces and territories and is another valuable resource for Canadians.
- Health Canada continues to work closely with the provinces and territories, providers and stakeholders to make additional tools available to Canadians and their families.
- The Canada COVID-19 App is a central resource for accessing reliable, evidence-based information about the COVID-19 pandemic in Canada. It does not contain any personal information and is not used for surveillance purposes.
- Protecting Canadians' information is a priority for the Government of Canada. If a tool were to be used to collect healthcare information, it would have to undergo a rigorous privacy impact assessment.



Federal funding for the COVID-19 response

- On March 11, 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.

Mental Health Support for Canadians

Wellness Together Canada

- Canadians need easy access to digital tools and resources to get the information they need during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- In these challenging times, it is essential that Canadians have access to effective tools to support their mental health and well-being, obtain credible and reliable information about mental health and substance use, and access services.
- That's why the Government of Canada is launching Wellness Together Canada, a portal providing support related to mental health and substance use. It is a central resource for accessing confidential support related to mental health and substance use during this time of COVID-19.



- Health Canada is pleased to have worked with a wide range of organizations that have a long history of providing high-quality mental health and substance use care to Canadians: Stepped Care Solutions, Kids Help Phone, Homewood Health, Greenspace Health, the Mental Health Commission of Canada and the Canadian Psychological Association.
- This web portal provides Canadians with a virtual network of psychosocial information and support services, and is available at Canada.ca/le-coronavirus and in the [Canada COVID-19 application](#).
- The Mental Health and Substance Use Support Portal of Wellness Together Canada was designed to support services already offered by the provinces and territories.
- Health Canada is working closely with the provinces and territories, providers and stakeholders to ensure that Canadians and their families have easy access to additional tools.

Funding for Kids Help Phone in response to increased demand for child and youth mental health services related to COVID-19

- The COVID-19 pandemic is a new and unexpected phenomenon that 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 schools closed and reduced access to community resources, Kids Help Phone is experiencing an increased demand for confidential crisis support services that are available 24/7 online, by phone and text messaging.
- As a result, the Government of Canada is providing Kids Help Phone with \$7.5 million in funding so that the organization can meet the increased demand and provide young people with the emotional support they need during this difficult time.
- With this additional support, it will be possible to offer electronic mental health services in English and French to children and youth across Canada who are experiencing the social and financial effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. In this way, vulnerable Canadian children and youth will get the help they need when they need it.
- This investment is an important first step in connecting Canadians across the country with the mental health resources they need.

Long-term care facilities

- We call on all Canadians to help protect seniors and medically vulnerable individuals who are at the greatest risk of suffering serious complications from COVID-19.



- We must all work to stop the spread of the virus among residents of long-term care facilities and the workers who care for them.
- A no-visit policy should be seriously considered. If visits are permitted, they should be strictly limited to those that are essential, i.e., those necessary to meet the basic personal medical or compassionate needs of residents. Essential visits should be limited to one person at a time for each resident.
- Like all Canadians, the residents and staff in long-term care facilities are expected to practise physical distancing as much as possible, including during meal times.
- Because they have direct contact with the most vulnerable people in our society, who are most likely to be seriously ill, healthcare workers should not go to work if they have symptoms.
- We understand that in order to stop the spread of COVID-19 and protect the most vulnerable, Canadians must make difficult decisions and personal sacrifices.

Guidelines

- The Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) provides evidence-based guidance on infection prevention and control to complement the efforts of provincial and territorial governments in the surveillance, prevention and control of healthcare-associated infections.
- The Government of Canada has published *Prevention and Control of Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19): Interim Guidelines for Long-Term Care Facilities* to assist employees and residents of 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 organizations.

Public Health Guidelines for Long-Term Care Facilities

- Extreme vigilance is required in long-term care facilities to prevent employees from reporting to work if they have symptoms.
- Employees should be screened for symptoms of COVID-19 before each shift, and those who begin to show symptoms during their shift should be managed immediately.
- Wherever possible, employers should work with their employees to restrict work to a single establishment and limit the number of areas of the establishment in which 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 visitors must come, they should be screened for fever, a cough or breathing difficulties, and they should not be allowed in if they have symptoms related to COVID.
- Many institutions have already taken measures such as prohibiting visits or other non-essential services on site.
- Long-term care facilities and assisted living facilities should also follow the recommendations of their provincial/territorial health authorities regarding the prevention of transmission of infections, including COVID-19.

Isolation, quarantine (voluntary isolation) and physical removal

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

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 the disease to others in your home and community.

You must:

- **go directly to your home and stay there if:**
 - You have been diagnosed with COVID-19 or if you are waiting to receive the results of a laboratory test for COVID-19;
 - You are experiencing any symptoms of COVID-19, no matter how mild, and:
 - You have been in contact with a suspected, probable or confirmed case of COVID-19;
 - A public health official has told you (directly or through a public communication or self-assessment tool) that you may have been exposed to COVID-19;
 - You have just returned from a trip outside Canada and are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 (mandatory).^{Footnote*}
- monitor your health for symptoms as instructed by your healthcare provider or the [public health authority](#) until an authority informs you that you are no longer at risk of transmitting the virus to others;
- contact your healthcare professional or the [public health authority](#) immediately if your symptoms get worse, and follow their instructions.
- **Limit contact with other people**
 - Do not leave your home unless you need to seek medical attention.
 - Do not use public transportation (such as buses and taxis).
 - Arrange for groceries and supplies to be dropped off at your door to limit contact.
 - Stay in a separate room and do not use the same bathroom as other members of your family, if possible.
 - If you need to be in contact with another person, practise physical distancing, keeping a distance of at least two metres between you and them.



- Avoid contact with people who have chronic diseases, people with weakened immune systems and the elderly.
- Keep interactions brief and wear a medical mask, or a non-medical mask or face shield (i.e., made to completely cover the nose and mouth and fit snugly to the face, held in place with ear loops or with ties behind the head and neck) if a medical mask is not available, when coughing, sneezing or if you need to be in the same room as other people in the house.
- Follow the instructions of your public health authority regarding the safe use and disposal or washing of masks.
- Avoid contact with animals, as there have been several reports of people passing COVID-19 to their pets.
- **Keep your hands clean**
 - Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds and dry them with disposable paper towels or reusable dry towels, which you can replace when wet.
 - You can also remove the dirt with a damp wipe and then use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
 - Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.
 - Cough or sneeze into the crease of your arm or into a tissue.
- **Avoid contamination of common objects and surfaces**
 - At least once a day, clean and disinfect surfaces you touch often, such as toilets, bedside tables, doorknobs, telephones and TV remotes.
 - Do not share personal items with others, such as toothbrushes, towels, bedding, utensils or electronics.
 - To disinfect objects and surfaces, use only approved hard-surface disinfectants with a Drug Identification Number (DIN). A DIN is an 8-digit number assigned by Health Canada that confirms that the disinfectant product is approved in Canada and is safe to use.
 - Place contaminated items that cannot be cleaned in a plastic-lined container, seal the container tightly and dispose of it with other household waste.
 - Close the toilet lid before flushing.
 - Masks, including non-medical masks and other face covers, can trap your respiratory droplets and prevent them from contaminating the surfaces around you. However, wearing a mask does not mean you can afford to clean less.
- **Take care of yourself**
 - Monitor your symptoms as instructed by your healthcare provider or the public health authority.
 - If your symptoms get worse, contact your healthcare provider or public health authority immediately and follow their instructions.
 - Rest, eat a balanced diet and stay in contact with others through “communication devices.”
- **Supplies to have at home during isolation**
 - Medical masks, if available, for individuals and healthcare providers. Alternatively, a non-medical mask or face cover (i.e., made to completely cover the nose and mouth and fit snugly to the face, held in place with ear loops or with ties behind the head and neck).



- Eye protection (face shield or safety glasses) for use by healthcare providers only.
- Disposable (not reusable) gloves for use by healthcare providers only.
- Disposable paper towels
- Paper handkerchiefs
- Bin with plastic liner
- Thermometer
- Over-the-counter medications to reduce fever (e.g., ibuprofen or acetaminophen)
- Running water
- Hand soap
- Alcohol-based hand disinfectant containing at least 60% alcohol
- Dishwashing soap
- Ordinary laundry soap
- Regular household cleaning products
- Disinfectant for hard surfaces; if not available, concentrated bleach (5%) and separate container for dilution
- Alcohol-impregnated wipes or approved cleaners for cleaning frequently touched electronic devices

Quarantine (voluntary isolation)

- You must quarantine for 14 days if you have **no symptoms** and **one** of the following situations applies to you:
 - You are returning from a trip **outside Canada** (self-isolation mandatory);
 - You have been in close contact with a person who has or may have COVID-19;
 - You have been informed by a public health official that you may have been exposed to the virus and that you must quarantine yourself.
- Placing yourself in quarantine means that for 14 days, you must:
 - **Stay home** and monitor your symptoms, even if they are mild;
 - Avoid contact with others to prevent transmission of the virus in the early stages of the disease;
 - Practise physical distancing in your home and community.
- If you develop symptoms, even mild ones, stay home and self-isolate immediately from other people who live with you. Immediately call a public health professional or the 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 epidemic.
- Everyone must follow physical distancing instructions, even if they:
 - have none of the symptoms of COVID-19;
 - have no known risk of having been exposed to the virus;
 - have not travelled outside Canada in the last 14 days.



- You can practise physical distancing by making changes to your daily routine to minimize close contact with others. For example:
 - Avoid crowded areas and gatherings;
 - Avoid customary greetings, such as handshakes;
 - Limit contact with people at higher risk (seniors, people in poor health, etc.);
 - Maintain whenever possible a distance of at least two arm lengths (about two metres) between yourself and other people.
- The most effective measures to stay healthy and prevent the spread of any respiratory infection are as follows:
 - Wash your hands often with soap and running water for at least 20 seconds;
 - Cough and sneeze into the crook of your arm, not your hands;
 - Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth, especially if you have not washed your hands;
 - Avoid close contact with people who are sick;
 - Stay home if you are sick to avoid spreading illness to others.
- While keeping a physical distance of two metres between you and others, you can:
 - Greet people with a wave of the hand instead of a handshake, kiss or hug;
 - Have food delivered or shop online;
 - Ask a family member, neighbour or friend to help you with essential errands;
 - Exercise at home;
 - Go outside to get some fresh air, run, bike or walk your dog;
 - Eat and play with family and friends online;
 - Use technology, such as video calling, to keep in touch with friends and family;
 - Work from home;
 - Get creative by drawing chalk art or by organizing games or obstacle courses in your back yard.

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
 - Obtain essential supplies (a few weeks' worth) so that 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.
- Make alternative arrangements in case you become ill or need to care for someone who is ill. For example:
 - Have backup childcare in case you or your usual care provider become ill.
 - If you care for dependants, have a backup caregiver in place.
 - Talk to your employer about working from home if possible.



- We know that the novel coronavirus can cause a range of symptoms, from mild to severe. Some people may not recognize the signs of illness when the first symptoms appear because they are similar to cold or flu symptoms.
- If you have symptoms (fever, cough or difficulty breathing) and think you may have COVID-19, contact a healthcare professional before coming in person so that appropriate action can be taken when you arrive.
- If you must visit a healthcare professional's office, call ahead so that appropriate measures can be taken when you arrive.
- **Stay informed.** Consult credible sources for up-to-date information and advice:
 - The [Canada.ca/coronavirus](https://www.canada.ca/coronavirus) web page;
 - The national toll-free telephone number (1-833-784-4397) for COVID-19;
 - The Government of Canada's Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn social media accounts;

Provincial, territorial and municipal government websites and social media accounts.

Application of mandatory isolation and quarantine (voluntary 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 practise physical distancing if they leave their home.
 - Every Canadian has a role to play and needs to understand the potential risk that they may have been exposed to the virus during any recent travel outside the country and the risk that they may pose to other Canadians, including the most vulnerable.
 - Canadians also need to respect any guidance given by local public health authorities and stay home if they are ill.
 - 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 required to self-isolate, 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, they can also continue to get fresh air and exercise outdoors while practising 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

- Quarantine laws at all levels of government contain very strict provisions 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 be taken, 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, washing their hands often and avoiding close contact with people who are sick.

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

- Based on the latest scientific data and in consultation with provincial and territorial experts, we have updated guidance on when people can end a period of home isolation after developing COVID-19 symptoms.
- The new guidance recommends that a person in home isolation, who had symptoms similar to those of COVID-19, be allowed to end the isolation period at least 10 days after the onset of the first symptoms, provided they are feeling better and do not have a fever.
- 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 may 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 a person who is isolated at home no longer needs to have two negative test results for COVID-19 at least 24 hours apart, as long as they no longer have symptoms consistent with COVID-19.
- This change does not apply to hospitalized patients.
- Provinces and territories may impose longer periods of isolation.
- Individuals who work in healthcare 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 must make an effort to reduce the spread of COVID-19 in Canada and flatten the curve. The use of proven measures, such as continuing the practice of physical distancing once home isolation is over, will contribute to our overall public health efforts and to the protection of Canada's most vulnerable people.

If pressed on why the criteria were changed

- Across Canada, we need to use our laboratory testing resources strategically.



- This change in the approach to laboratory testing will help to ensure optimal use of limited health and laboratory resources.
- Not all home-isolated individuals 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 provinces and territories to recommend a period of home isolation for individuals showing symptoms consistent with COVID-19 without requiring multiple laboratory tests.

If pressed on how the period was determined

- Research and data collection on COVID-19 continue 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 samples from these same individuals were tested using another test (polymerase chain reaction [PCR]), several of them tested positive because this test can detect both active and inactive viruses.
- In other words, some people may receive a positive test result even though they are no longer likely to transmit the virus to someone else.
- In the absence of a large body 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 directive replaces the current, more stringent and resource-intensive requirement that two negative test results be obtained before a person can be released from isolation at home.



Modelling and surveillance

Surveillance of COVID-19

- Canada's health system has been on high alert for many weeks to detect possible COVID-19 cases.
- Front-line healthcare professionals and laboratories carefully sorted and screened possible cases. Public health authorities conduct detailed investigations and contact tracing for all confirmed cases to exclude the possibility of community spread.
- Canada is strengthening its approach to preparedness and response, based on the latest and best available evidence, to address the challenges posed by this evolving outbreak.
- Currently, Canada continues to focus on confinement to delay and slow the spread of COVID-19. We do this through early identification of cases, meticulous tracing of close contacts, and the use of proven public health measures such as isolation. We also recommend that Canadians practise physical distancing: in other words, stay at least two metres away from other people when the situation permits.
- In the event of community transmission, these measures will be maintained as long as possible to break the chains of transmission and to delay and reduce epidemic activity where appropriate.
- In addition, as the COVID-19 outbreak has spread rapidly to countries around the world, we are placing a higher priority on increasing surveillance in Canada.
- This will enhance our ability to detect cases that could lead to a potential community spread in Canada and help public health authorities act quickly and in a targeted manner to stop, delay and reduce the impact of a COVID-19 outbreak.
- Canada has a highly integrated federal, provincial and territorial approach to surveillance, involving front-line healthcare facilities and laboratories across the country with effective means of detecting respiratory diseases, including COVID-19.
- In addition, public health laboratories across Canada are working together to make the results of COVID-19 testing public on a weekly basis. These reports will allow us to track where COVID-19 cases have been identified and will provide us with an early signal of potential outbreaks that may indicate community spread.
- Surveillance in hospitals is another important means of detecting cases of COVID-19. These facilities allow us to monitor people with respiratory symptoms, including patients with pneumonia or serious infections, even if they have not travelled to an affected country. This is another way to extend the scope of our surveillance to detect signs of possible community spread so that public health authorities can take appropriate action.



- Finally, Canada has networks of pediatricians and family physicians that are critical to surveillance. These networks bring together front-line primary care providers, who are often the first to detect new or unexpected patterns of illness and can provide an early warning that we have an emerging health problem.
- It is by collating data from all these sources that we can detect signals and analyze transmission patterns to closely monitor the emergence and spread of COVID-19 in communities across Canada.

Data Modelling (April 9)

- The Government of Canada continues to work with its provincial, territorial and international partners to ensure that the response to the COVID-19 outbreak is based on the latest scientific data and the situational assessment.
- We are constantly analyzing the data and results of clinical and epidemiological studies as we obtain them to determine when the public health measures are working and when we need to do more to control the epidemic.
- We are also working with provincial and territorial governments and universities to predict how COVID-19 could spread in Canada in the future and to estimate ranges for the possible numbers of cases, hospitalizations and deaths that could occur in the coming weeks and months.
- Based on these models, we can prepare our healthcare system to provide care for the projected number of patients and determine what public health measures may be needed to change the course of the epidemic in Canada.
- Our actions have a very large impact on the models. We can all contribute to reducing the impact of COVID-19 in Canada by maintaining our physical distancing efforts.
- Since infection rates vary across the country, projections of the effects also vary from one province and territory to another.
- Predictive modelling for COVID-19 involves making assumptions based on incomplete data and changing scientific knowledge. These assumptions change as new information about the virus and more data about the epidemic in Canada become available.
- We are continually improving the models to provide Canadians with the best possible information on outcomes.

Virus epidemiology

- In Canada and around the world, researchers are actively investigating all aspects of the novel coronavirus outbreak to improve understanding of this disease and how the outbreak may progress.



- Canada is following the guidance of the World Health Organization (WHO), which recommends a quarantine period of two weeks (14 days).
- The WHO stated on February 10, 2020, that it was not considering changing its recommended quarantine time.
- The 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 as a result of the second exposure, it may mistakenly appear as though the incubation period was longer than 14 days because the “clock” was not reset at the time of the second exposure.
- To date, there has been no verified data showing that the incubation period extends beyond 14 days. The report from China needs to be thoroughly reviewed to determine whether this finding is valid.
- The Public Health Agency of Canada (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.
- PHAC continues to liaise with international partners, including the WHO, to improve understanding of the epidemiology of this disease.

Analysis

- The Public Health Agency of Canada’ National Microbiology Laboratory (NML) in Winnipeg conducts diagnostic testing to detect the virus that causes COVID-19.
- The NML is working closely with provincial and territorial public health laboratories to ensure that the diagnosis of individuals being tested for the novel coronavirus is confirmed or ruled out by laboratory testing.
- Several provincial public health laboratories can now test for the novel coronavirus with a very high degree of accuracy.
- British Columbia, Saskatchewan, Alberta, Ontario and Quebec are able to confirm the results of laboratory tests for the virus that causes COVID-19. For the remaining provinces, their results are subject to additional testing at the NML because this is a previously unknown virus and it is good practice to perform additional testing to confirm initial laboratory results.
- Cases presumed to be positive according to testing by the provinces and territories are treated, from a public health and infection control perspective, in the same manner as confirmed cases.



- Provinces and territories are using the screening approach developed and validated by the Public Health Agency of Canada's National Microbiology Laboratory (NML).
- In addition, results from provincial laboratories are subject to quality assurance testing at the NML.

Screening tests for symptomatic individuals

- Laboratory tests for the novel coronavirus in symptomatic individuals has obvious clinical and public health value, but the same is not true for tests in asymptomatic individuals.
- Canada continues, and will continue, to conduct testing for all symptomatic individuals as part of our evidence-based approach, while taking into account the evolving scientific knowledge of alternative testing scenarios. Our approach will keep pace with evolving science, and policies and protocols will be updated accordingly.
- One thing is certain about our approach: tests are carried out for all symptomatic people, and our symptom threshold for this purpose is very low.
- It is important to understand that this is not a simple and straightforward issue and that some scientific data is uncertain.

Reasons why asymptomatic individuals are not tested for COVID-19

- It is important to focus the screening efforts on the right people at the right time.
- In Canada, screening is focused on individuals who present with symptoms similar to those with COVID-19.
- Screening asymptomatic individuals is not considered an effective way to detect and prevent the spread of this virus and could give a false sense of security.
- Testing performed on asymptomatic individuals gives a false sense of security because it does not mean that these individuals will not become symptomatic and develop the disease during the incubation period. Timing of the testing is important. That is why we have taken the precaution of re-quarantining people in Canada. Monitoring during the 14-day incubation period provides real security and is more effective in preventing the spread of the virus than a potentially false negative test result.
- In addition, when an asymptomatic person has a positive test result, the meaning and implications of that result are unclear. A positive result may indicate the detection of generic virus material, without necessarily implying that the person is contagious to others.
- The majority of people tested to date have been symptomatic and have travelled to, or come into contact with someone who had travelled to, countries known to be affected.



- Recently, all travellers returning to Canada have been instructed to self-monitor for symptoms, regardless of where they are returning from. If they develop symptoms, they are asked to isolate themselves and contact their public health authority or a health professional, who will determine whether further assessment of their health status is required and whether they should be tested.
- In addition, anyone who is tested for respiratory viruses is now tested for COVID-19, even if they have not travelled.
- This approach helps us to intensify our efforts, as it allows us to detect and monitor any possible spread of COVID-19 in the community without delay.

Unusable swabs

- The Government of Canada is aware of the problems associated with some swabs received last week.
- These swabs were delivered as part of a bulk order of 8.85 million swabs expected by Canada in April and May.
- The manufacturer (ESBE Scientific) is a reputable company and licensed by Health Canada. We have been informed that the company has suspended production to solve manufacturing problems. As a result, future swab deliveries are likely to be delayed while the company addresses its quality issues.
- The problem could affect future orders. The Public Health Agency of Canada continues to work directly with the provinces and territories to identify their medical supply needs and to place bulk orders. Public Services and Procurement Canada will continue to identify all suppliers capable of meeting Canada's needs.

Serology and certificates of immunity

- Every day, we learn more about COVID-19 by keeping abreast of new science as it becomes available. This approach is essential for decision-making.
- Internationally, efforts are being made to determine whether those people who have recovered from the disease can safely return to work. No decision has yet been made in Canada on whether to certify the immune status of people.
- As the virus causing COVID-19 is new, we need more data before knowing whether people who have recovered from the disease will have long-term protective immunity.
- At this point, we do not know if people who have recovered will have immunity and how long this immunity may last, nor do we know if it is possible to get COVID-19 twice or if the disease will be milder or more severe the second time.



- We recognize that it can be difficult to wait for scientific data, but as we learn more about COVID-19 we are compelled to use proven public health measures.
- We continue to recommend that Canadians stay home, wash their hands well, and practise physical distancing. These are proven public health measures.
- We are working hard to improve our knowledge of COVID-19 in Canada so that we can continue to adapt our response to slow the spread of the virus.

If pressed on serological testing

- The Public Health Agency of Canada's National Microbiology Laboratory (NML) is developing a number of in-house serological tests in addition to evaluating a range of commercial tests related to COVID-19.
- Serological tests detect the presence of virus-specific antibodies in patients' blood and allows public health professionals to identify individuals who have been exposed to the virus that causes COVID-19.
- Serological tests can be used to determine the immunity status of individuals by detecting antibodies in the blood of people who have recovered from an infection.
- The ability to screen for antibodies provides a better understanding of how the immune system responds to the virus that causes COVID-19 and serves as a tool for evaluating new vaccines and other treatments.
- Serological tests will contribute to increasing diagnostic capacity and will be used to study community transmission and exposure rates as well as the effectiveness of new treatments.
- The design and application of a serological test for COVID-19 presents difficulties as it is a new virus, and until further research is carried out, new tests cannot be performed.

If asked why Canada is not following the lead of the United Kingdom and Germany

- More research is needed before Canada makes any decisions.
- Other respiratory viruses do not generally provide full immunity to people who have recovered from them.
- At this point, we do not yet know if people who have recovered from COVID-19 will have immunity and how long this immunity may last, if it is possible to catch COVID-19 twice, or whether the illness will be milder or more severe the second time.
- Canada will continue to work with its international partners to share information on measures and best practices to guide our domestic approach.



About presymptomatic and asymptomatic transmission

- Now that more countries have recorded significant numbers of cases and analyzed modes of transmission, recent studies show that infected people can transmit the virus before they even have any symptoms. This is known as presymptomatic transmission.
- Data also show that some infected people can transmit the virus without ever having any symptoms. This phenomenon is called asymptomatic transmission.
- Currently, we do not know the extent to which presymptomatic and asymptomatic transmission play a role in the progression of the pandemic, but we do know that this type of transmission occurs in people who come into close contact or are in cramped quarters with infected people.
- The main vectors of the COVID-19 pandemic are individuals with visible symptoms because coughing and respiratory droplets are the main ways that the virus spreads. However, because asymptomatic transmission has now been proven to exist, it is important that everyone, even people who do not feel ill, follow practices proven to prevent 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.

Canadian hospitals join global drug trials

- COVID-19 is a global pandemic that requires a global solution.
- Various countries, including Canada, are participating in an unprecedented mega-trial of potential COVID-19 treatments. This is truly a new model of global collaboration.



- This global trial, coordinated by the World Health Organization, will test several potential drug treatments for COVID-19. Since all countries will use the same trial design, this will enable quicker, more reliable results.
- As with all unproven treatments, there are risks and benefits. It is therefore preferable to use potential treatments in a clinical trial.
- Through the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, the Government of Canada has invested close to \$1 million in the Canadian component of this global trial. This investment is part of the government's \$275 million commitment to support medical research on the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Canada has some of the brightest and highest-skilled researchers in the world working tirelessly to support the international fight against this pandemic. Up to 20 institutions across the country will be invited to participate in the Canadian arm of this global trial.
- To advance research and development of COVID-19 vaccines, the World Health Organization (WHO), in conjunction with the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations, is coordinating an international collaboration.

Investigational therapies

- No drug or health product with a therapeutic claim may be sold or marketed in Canada without first being approved by Health Canada as safe, effective and high quality. This approval process is initiated when a drug or health product manufacturer files a submission with Health Canada.
- To ensure that Canadians have access to effective COVID-19 health products as quickly as possible, Health Canada is expediting the review of all submissions related to this disease.
- At this time, no drug is registered as specifically treating or preventing COVID-19. Clinical trials are the best way to access drugs that show promise in treating COVID-19.
- Health Canada invites practitioners prescribing experimental treatments for COVID-19 patients to contact the Department to initiate a clinical trial.
- The Department continues to monitor the post-market safety and efficacy of drugs and health products.

If pressed on the fast-tracking of treatment availability

- Health Canada acknowledges that Canadians want quick access to promising new drugs and health products, especially when treatment options are limited.
- 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.



- 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 background: Some healthcare providers prescribe off-label drugs to treat COVID-19 symptoms. This means that they treat COVID-19 by prescribing drugs that are authorized and indicated for the treatment of other health problems.

- In Canada, a practitioner's decision to prescribe or use a drug for an approved or off-label indication is part of the routine medical practice regulated by provincial and territorial authorities.
- Although Health Canada regulates drugs in Canada, practitioners must ensure that a drug's potential benefits outweigh its risks to patients. Thus, they are responsible for considering the information in the Canadian product monograph, on the labels of approved products, and from other reliable sources such as medical journals, reports, and peer-reviewed studies.
- An off-label use may not be supported by the same level of scientific evidence as an authorized use. An off-label prescription may be justified by a range of data, from rigorous clinical studies to anecdotal evidence, without substantial scientific validation.
- Drug labels are designed to indicate the authorized use of a drug and therefore might not provide all the required information for safe and effective off-label use. This means that off-label drug use may involve less information about potential interactions with other drugs and about other potential adverse effects.
- It is illegal to directly or indirectly promote investigational therapies or the off-label use of authorized drugs.
- Health Canada encourages practitioners to consider the off-label use of drugs to treat COVID-19 in a clinical trial. This will help collect and use data to inform future prescribing practices.

If pressed on clinical trials

- Clinical trials play a critical role in advancing research and evaluating investigational products to respond to emerging health issues.
- Clinical trials aim to identify whether the use of a drug or medical device is effective and safe for humans.
- Clinical trials require the informed patient consent, monitoring and protection to ensure participants' safety.



- Clinical trials enable the healthcare community to systematically collect information about the effectiveness and potential risks of treatments. This in turn informs treatment decisions for other patients.

If pressed on what is being done to address potential drug shortages

- Health Canada is closely monitoring the supply of drugs needed to support patients with COVID-19 and is working with industry, other federal departments, the provinces and territories, and stakeholders across the supply chain to ensure a continuous supply in Canada.
- Health Canada is aware of a shortage of hydroxychloroquine, a drug approved for the treatment of lupus, rheumatoid arthritis and malaria, which is being studied as a potential treatment for COVID-19.
- Hydroxychloroquine is currently marketed in Canada by four companies: Apotex Inc., JAMP Pharma Corporation, Mint Pharmaceuticals Inc. and Sanofi-Aventis Canada Inc. Apotex Inc. is currently reporting a shortage of this drug due to increased demand, with an anticipated end date of April 15, 2020. The other three companies have reported no shortages at this time.
- The Department is working with industry and healthcare partners to mitigate the impact of increased demand for this drug, including working with companies that can increase supply in the Canadian market and examining international supply.

Hydroxychloroquine sulfate and azithromycin for the treatment of COVID-19

- Canadians who are ill with COVID-19 and their families need access to safe and effective health products and drugs for detecting and treating the illness.
- The preliminary evidence from some studies suggests that hydroxychloroquine, alone or combined with azithromycin, may be effective in reducing the viral load in patients with COVID-19, as well as in treating respiratory tract infections caused by COVID-19.
- There is very little evidence on the combined use of hydroxychloroquine and azithromycin to treat COVID-19. Like all drugs, their use is associated with some demonstrated risks.
- Canada has approved the use of either hydroxychloroquine or azithromycin to treat some diseases. Nonetheless, based on patients' needs and the seriousness of their illness, physicians may also prescribe these drugs off-label when they deem that the potential benefits outweigh the known risks.
 - Hydroxychloroquine is approved for treating lupus, rheumatoid arthritis and malaria.
 - Azithromycin is an antibiotic used to treat pneumonia and other bacterial infections.



- It is important to protect access to these drugs for patients who need them for approved uses.
- Because the use of these drugs to treat COVID-19 is in its early experimental stage, Health Canada recommends that practitioners who wish to prescribe these therapies to treat COVID-19 do so through a clinical trial.
- A clinical trial requires patients' informed consent and enables the medical establishment to systematically collect data about the risks and benefits of the treatment.
- All clinical trials on the treatment of COVID-19 are being reviewed on a priority basis. Any company, physician or researcher interested in conducting a clinical trial must contact Health Canada.

If pressed on the National Emergency Strategic Stockpile

- The Government of Canada has added hydroxychloroquine to the National Emergency Strategic Stockpile (NESS) The stocks will be used first for approved applications, and then in clinical trials for the treatment of COVID-19.
- Hydroxychloroquine will be phased into the NESS over several months to minimize the impacts on its availability for approved applications.
- Provinces and territories experiencing resource shortages can turn to the NESS in emergency responses to infectious disease outbreaks, natural disasters or other public health events.
- The stockpile contains varied materials, including medical devices, drugs, beds and blankets.
- The NESS is meant to help supplement provincial and territorial resources during public health events that are rare or have major repercussions.
- The NESS is not intended to replace provincial or territorial stocks or purchases. Provinces and territories must prepare and maintain their own procurement capabilities.
- Since the coronavirus outbreak in China in January, the Public Health Agency of Canada has been closely monitoring the situation, assessing the NESS inventory and procuring supplies to respond to a potential outbreak in Canada.
- There is a global supply shortage. The federal government is continuing to work aggressively to secure all needed supplies as quickly as possible and 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.
- Four companies market hydroxychloroquine in Canada: Apotex Inc., JAMP Pharma Corporation, Mint Pharmaceuticals Inc., and Sanofi-Aventis Canada Inc. Health Canada has been informed that all four companies have experienced an increase in demand. At the moment, Apotex Inc. is the only company to have reported a shortage caused by the increase in demand, which is expected to end on April 15, 2020.
- There are 16 companies that 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 Limitée, 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 the hydroxychloroquine shortage

- Health Canada is aware of the current hydroxychloroquine shortage. This drug, approved for the treatment of lupus, rheumatoid arthritis and malaria, is being investigated for possible use in treating COVID-19.
- Health Canada is working closely with other federal government departments, the provinces and territories, industry, regulators outside of Canada and other stakeholders to mitigate the impact of the shortage on patients, including by asking companies to increase the supply of hydroxychloroquine in the Canadian market and by exploring opportunities to obtain hydroxychloroquine from the international market.
- The hydroxychloroquine shortage is at Tier 3. Tier 3 shortages can have the most serious impact on Canada's drug supply and healthcare systems.
- The Tier Assignment Committee (TAC), which includes federal and provincial/territorial governments, healthcare professionals, and industry stakeholders, makes recommendations on the tier assignment of drug shortages.

If pressed on Health Canada's actions to mitigate COVID-19-related shortages

- Health Canada is closely monitoring the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on Canada's drug supply. This includes targeting supply chains' weakest links so as to fill gaps and avoid shortages.
- The Department has also heightened its monitoring efforts and consults regularly, sometimes daily, with the provinces and territories, the pharmaceutical industry, the health sector and patient groups. Health Canada also shares information on all global supply disruptions through international collaborations with other regulatory agencies. These include the European Medicines Agency, the United States Food and Drug



Administration, the Australian Therapeutic Goods Administration and the World Health Organization. This ongoing dialogue allows us to better detect shortages, prepare mitigation strategies, and respond in a coordinated manner.

- Under the government-wide response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the government passed the *COVID-19 Emergency Measures Act* on March 25, and amended the *Food and Drugs Act* to enable Health Canada to implement stronger measures to reduce and try to prevent shortages.
- On March 30, the Minister of Health signed an Interim Order authorizing the exceptional importation and sale of drugs, medical devices and foods for a special dietary purpose that are needed to prevent or alleviate the effects of shortages directly or indirectly related to COVID-19.
- The Interim Order authorizes the exceptional importation of some drugs that may not fully comply with Canadian regulations (on bilingual labelling, for example) but are manufactured to Canadian-equivalent standards. The goal is to maintain Canada's drug supply and protect the health of Canadians during this period.
- Only drugs included on the *List of Drugs for Exceptional Importation and Sale* will be eligible for the exceptional importation and sale provisions provided for in the Interim Order. For the time being, only drugs for which a Tier 3 shortage has been reported, such as hydroxychloroquine, will be eligible for inclusion on this list.
- No drugs are on this list yet. However, under this new process, Health Canada will assess proposals from companies interested in accessing drugs deemed to meet Tier 3 shortage criteria, including hydroxychloroquine. The Department will amend the list as required.
- Health Canada will continue to collaborate with other federal government departments, the provinces and territories, international partners and industry to ensure that Canadians have continued access to the drugs and medical devices they need during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Other messages on 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.
- These measures could include the following:
 - giving priority to scientific studies on these new drugs and vaccines, or issue conditional Notices of Compliance
 - using 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
 - conducting clinical trials in Canada on new vaccines, new or adapted antivirals, and supportive therapies.
- Other complementary measures could also be taken:



- establishing a Special Access Program for drugs, for professionals treating patients with serious or life-threatening conditions in which conventional therapies have not been proven effective, or where they are not available
- importation of any new drug authorized for sale in the United States, Switzerland or the European Union to meet urgent public health needs, using the list of drugs.

Medical supplies and appliances

Canada's Supply of PPE and Medical Supplies

- We are aware of the shortage of personal protective equipment (PPE) and medical supplies in Canada and are committed to doing whatever it takes to protect the health of Canadians; especially front-line healthcare workers, from COVID-19.
- The Government of Canada is working with provincial and territorial governments to quickly assess PPE (N95 masks, surgical masks, face shields, nitrile gloves, gowns and other protective clothing) and medical supply (disinfectant, respirators, swabs and test kits) needs.
- To meet these needs, we are purchasing large quantities of equipment and supplies, investing in COVID-19 screening and working with Canadian companies to increase their manufacturing capacity.
- We have also received donations from national and international organizations.
- Canada is striving to rapidly distribute PPE and medical supplies to the provinces and territories based on an approach agreed upon by federal, provincial and territorial Ministers of Health.
- The Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) also sends PPE and respirators from the National Strategic Emergency Stockpile System (NESS) to provinces and territories upon request.
- Canada's NESS contains supplies that provinces and territories may request in emergency situations, such as an infectious disease outbreak. Its purpose is to help provide additional support in times of crisis to complement provincial and territorial resources.
- Provinces and territories are responsible for preparing and maintaining their own supply capacities.

Regulatory measures to improve access to medical devices (including PPE)

- Over the past few weeks, we supported the government-wide response to COVID-19 by taking the following actions:



- Expedited access to COVID-19 medical devices, such as test kits.
- Expedited issuance of establishment and manufacturing licences.
- Permitted importation and sale of unapproved medical devices in Canada, in accordance with specific requirements, to address shortages.
- Simplified access to products that may not meet all current regulatory requirements such as bilingual labels. This includes personal protective equipment (masks and gowns), swabs as well as hand and surface disinfectant.
- Amendments to the *Food and Drugs Act* and the *Patent Act* to support efforts to prevent and respond to shortages.

Health Canada will monitor and evaluate the safety, quality and effectiveness of all products permitted to be imported and sold under these special measures.

Supply contracts to increase the quantity of supplies in Canada

- Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada and Public Services and Procurement Canada continue to mobilize Canadian industries to increase domestic production capability. Specifically, factories are being transformed to produce equipment and supplies including portable respirators, surgical masks and rapid test kits.
- As a result of these efforts, the Government of Canada has signed procurement agreements with Canadian companies such as Thornhill Medical, Medicom and Spartan Bioscience.
- The government has also signed letters of intent with companies, including 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.
- Throughout this process, PHAC and Health Canada played a leading role in conducting technical reviews to ensure that products met the Government of Canada's technical specifications for COVID-19, which are set out on Public Services and Procurement Canada's [Buy and Sell website](#).
- The Government of Canada also awarded a contract to Amazon, which will manage the logistics of PPE distribution and supplies in order to support the fight against COVID-19.
- Amazon will work directly with Canada Post to provide storage services. Amazon will also use its current delivery service providers, Canada Post and Purolator, to ship products to the health authorities of all provinces and territories for use by front-line healthcare workers.

PPE purchases and donations

- PHAC verifies all purchased or donated medical supplies and personal protective equipment received by the Government of Canada. PHAC's role is to ensure compliance



with the technical specifications for COVID-19 products provided on Public Services and Procurement Canada's Buy and Sell website.

- The verification process varies depending on the medical device. For example, acceptable alternatives to N95 masks, such as KN95 respiratory masks, are visually inspected for design and manufacturing defects and tested to ensure that the flow rate, pressure drop and penetration meet the requirements for filtration masks. The gowns are visually inspected and tested for liquid resistance.
- Some of the supplies may be unknown to our healthcare providers. The supplies that satisfy the relevant technical specifications are distributed to the provinces and territories with documentation confirming their compliance and providing instructions for use.
- For example, supplies received from China may be labelled in Mandarin. PHAC cannot replace all the item labels while ensuring timely distribution. Therefore, provinces and territories are encouraged to follow PHAC's instructions accompanying the supplies, all while ensuring appropriate training of front-line healthcare workers.
- The KN95 mask is another example. Fit testing is standard procedure for the N95 mask. However, the KN95 mask cannot be tested this way. This is why PHAC will request that the provinces and territories perform fit testing. Since healthcare workers may be unfamiliar with this process, they will be provided with instructions.
- The Government of Canada gladly accepts the generous PPE donations coming from many international and national organizations. These include the Jack Ma Foundation/Alibaba, Home Depot, Apple, CBC/Radio-Canada, Shell and AstraZeneca.
- We are pleased to see so many Canadians coming together to help those who need it most.

Coordinated Government of Canada response to purchasing equipment and supplies

- The Government of Canada has taken a coordinated approach to distribute the needed supplies and equipment across the country.
 - **Public Services and Procurement Canada:** PSPC is leveraging existing procurement agreements and reaches out to the national and international supply communities to identify and purchase required products.

The Department is inviting all suppliers to come forward with products and/or services they could offer to support Canada's response.

- **Public Health Agency of Canada:** PHAC ensures collaboration with federal partners, provinces and territories to identify needs and requirements for the



COVID-19 response. The Agency also oversees Canada's National Strategic Emergency Stockpile, which contains supplies provinces and territories can request in emergency situations.

- **Health Canada:** As the regulatory agency for health products, Health Canada is working to expedite access to the 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 adopted an interim measure to facilitate access to certain products, such as PPE.

Under the Interim Order, a medical device licence is required to sell and import high-risk medical devices in 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 responsible for Canada's Plan to Mobilize Industry to fight COVID-19. It introduces new measures to directly support businesses seeking to rapidly increase 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 businesses.
- **National Research Council:** The NRC's Industrial Research Assistance Program builds on its existing relationships with thousands of Canada's most innovative small and medium-sized businesses to challenge the marketplace to find innovative solutions to fight COVID-19.

Legislative changes

Key messages regarding legislative changes

- To facilitate Canada's response to COVID-19, the new legislative amendments will grant the Minister of Health new powers to:
 - Introduce regulations that help prevent or alleviate drug and medical device shortages;
 - request additional information from companies that produce food, drugs, cosmetics or medical devices to assess the new products' risks and benefits and to confirm that they are safe for Canadians;
 - obtain authorization for third-party manufacturers to provide the necessary patented inventions, such as drugs or medical equipment, to whatever extent is required to fight this pandemic.



- These measures received Royal Assent on March 25, 2020, and came into force immediately.
- Changes to the *Food and Drugs Act* and the authority granted to the Commissioner of Patents to give authorizations will remain in force until September 30, 2020.
- Health Canada is committed to implementing the necessary measures to continue protecting the health and safety of Canadians during this pandemic. It will take appropriate action, in collaboration with the provinces and territories and with other stakeholders, to ensure the supply of drugs and medical devices needed in Canada.

How these changes work with the *Protecting Canadians from Unsafe Drugs Act (Vanessa's Law)*

- These amendments complement the powers granted by *Vanessa's law*:
 - by granting the authority to collect additional safety information to guide decisions about new products marketed, or already on the market, in Canada;
 - by expanding the scope of these powers to include other potential new products, including cosmetics and foods for special dietary purposes, that may be required to address shortages during the pandemic.

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

- A number of people with problems linked to drug addiction, or who suffer from chronic pain, may have difficulty effectively applying physical distancing principles if no changes are made to prescription and distribution practices. In these times of emergency, we must do everything we can to give these people access to the medications they need.
- Health Canada is working with the provinces and territories to undertake concrete action to enable patients and practitioners to reduce social interactions without limiting access to essential medications.
- On March 19, 2020, Health Canada issued a six-month exemption for prescriptions for controlled substances (such as narcotics) under the *Controlled Drugs and Substances Act* and its regulations. This temporary exemption allows pharmacists to prescribe, sell or provide controlled substances in limited circumstances, or to transfer prescriptions for these substances.
- In accordance with the laws and regulations of the province or territory in which the pharmacist is licensed to practise, the exemption:
 - Allows pharmacists to extend or renew prescriptions;
 - Allows pharmacists to transfer prescriptions to other pharmacists;
 - Authorize pharmacy employees to deliver controlled substances to a patient's home or any other location where they may be.



- To facilitate physical distancing and reduce pressure on emergency rooms and healthcare professionals across Canada during the COVID-19 pandemic, the temporary exemption also allows prescribers, including nurse practitioners, to orally authorize the extension or renewal of a prescription (e.g., by telephone).
- The exemption will be in effect until September 30, 2020, but may be extended or ended earlier by Health Canada if necessary.
- Amendments to legislation and regulations in some provinces or territories may be required to allow pharmacists and nurse practitioners to carry out these new activities. Health Canada recommends that you contact a pharmacist or the regulatory agency in your province or territory to find out if and when these services will be 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 similar exemptions during the 2020 winter storm in Newfoundland and Labrador.

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

- The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has significant impacts on Canadians and the healthcare system. It is essential to ensure that the Government of Canada can respond effectively to the needs of those impacted.
- In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Minister of Health signed an Interim Order to help prevent and alleviate shortages of drugs, medical devices, and foods for a special dietary purpose whether they result directly or indirectly from the pandemic.
- Upon its entry into force, the Order will authorize the importation and sale of products that are unregistered in Canada, subject to certain requirements.
- As with all pharmaceuticals and medical devices, Health Canada will assess and monitor the safety, security, quality and effectiveness of all products allowed to be imported and sold under the Interim Order. Drug and medical device manufacturers will be required to comply with strict monitoring requirements.
- The Interim Order will also require manufacturers and importers of medical devices deemed essential during the COVID-19 pandemic to report existing or anticipated shortages, as is currently the case with drugs. Those responsible for healthcare systems will be better prepared to redistribute materials based on needs, thereby providing Canadians with ongoing access to these products.
- The Interim Order will also expedite the marketing of certain hard-surface disinfectants and hand sanitizers.



- Collectively, these measures will improve access to drugs, medical devices, and foods for special dietary purposes that Canadians need to stay healthy and safe. They will also help sick patients recover.

Interim Order respecting medical devices for use in relation to COVID-19

- A diagnosis is essential to slow and reduce the spread of COVID-19 in Canada.
- As an emergency public health measure, the Minister of Health signed an Interim Order for expedited access to medical devices related to COVID-19.
- With the Interim Order, two new diagnostic tests are made readily accessible in Canada:
 - The Roche Molecular Systems Inc. cobas SARS-CoV-2 diagnostic test.
 - The ThermoFisher Scientific TaqPath™ COVID-19 Combo Kit
- For the Government of Canada, an Interim Order is one of the fastest mechanisms for ensuring availability of health products required in order to respond to major public health emergencies.

If pressed on the US directive to allow unauthorized health products

- Health Canada continues to use all the tools at its disposal to expedite the supply of health products related to COVID-19. However, the Department does not provide blanket approval for unapproved drugs or devices. We will update Canadians with any new information as it becomes available.
- The Interim Order will also ensure that other COVID-19–related medical devices are available to treat, mitigate or prevent the disease if 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.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

- Based on the needs reported by the provinces and territories, the joint procurement efforts of the federal, provincial and territorial governments focus on the purchase of large quantities of N95 masks, surgical masks, face shields, nitrile gloves, gowns, other protective clothing, disinfectant, respirators and analytical equipment.
- Small quantities of PPE have begun arriving as a result of the joint procurement efforts of F/P/T governments. The equipment received is sent to the provinces and territories.
- To meet short-term needs, the Public Health Agency of Canada sends PPE and respirators to provinces and territories that request assistance.
- Discussions are ongoing within the Government of Canada (Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada, Public Services and Procurement Canada, Health Canada



and the Public Health Agency of Canada) to identify new supply routes and increase domestic production.

- For example, the Public Health Agency of Canada is working with Public Services and Procurement Canada to finalize a long-term agreement with Medicom for mask production. Medicom shipped 8.5 million surgical masks this week. More shipments are expected next week.
- Canada Goose has received its Medical Device Establishment Licence from Health Canada. This will allow the company to re-tool its facilities to produce gowns.

Re-use of single-use medical devices

- As with other hospital practices, the purchase and use of reprocessed medical devices by healthcare institutions is the responsibility of provincial and territorial governments.
- Given the shortage of some medical devices caused by COVID-19, Health Canada is working on guidelines for cleaning and sterilizing single-use medical devices.
- In recent weeks, the Government of Canada has taken additional emergency measures to facilitate access to new COVID-19 diagnostic test kits, disinfectants, hand sanitizers, personal protective equipment and swabs for testing.

Existing Recommendations

- In May 2016, Health Canada issued a notice to the industry concerning the re-use of single-use medical devices.
- Under the federal regulatory framework, companies that reprocess and distribute medical devices originally labelled as single-use to Canadian healthcare facilities are held to the same Health Canada requirements as manufacturers of new devices.
- This means that these companies must comply with the requirements for registration, quality system management, labelling, complaint handling, distribution records, enforcing market recalls and reporting incidents. They must also report any changes to the information on their application form to Health Canada.
- Reprocessed medical devices must clearly identify the name of the reprocessing manufacturer and contain instructions for safe re-use, i.e. how and who should reprocess the devices. In addition, the single-use symbol must be removed from the labels.
- As with other hospital practices, the purchase and use of reprocessed medical devices by healthcare institutions is the responsibility of provincial and territorial governments.



Masks

Re-use of masks

- N95 masks are single-use products. With collaborators from the University of Manitoba and the Health Sciences Centre, PHAC's National Microbiology Laboratory scientists have conducted substantial research to determine whether these masks could be decontaminated and possibly re-used.
- In the laboratory, our scientists successfully decontaminated N95 masks using four different approaches while maintaining the masks' structural and protective properties.
- Note that the virus used in the experiment is not the one that causes COVID-19. Research is underway to evaluate these approaches using the novel coronavirus. Results are expected in the days following April 2, 2020.
- The preliminary research is promising: if proven effective against the coronavirus, it could help protect decreasing stocks of essential personal protective equipment.
- This is an example of important scientific work that harnesses the ingenuity of talented researchers to find solutions to the challenges posed by COVID-19.
- The Government of Canada encourages scientific research that enhances Canada's ability to fight COVID-19.

If pressed

- Four N95 respirators were evaluated using the following techniques: standard autoclaving, ethylene oxide gassing, ionized hydrogen peroxide fogging and hydrogen peroxide vapour treatment.

Use of non-medical masks (or face 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 rapidly evolve. We are continually looking at the evidence as it is being produced and working with our national and international partners to learn more.
- The following are proven methods to prevent transmission of COVID-19:
 - Stay home as much as possible;
 - Practise physical distancing;
 - Wash your hands;
 - Protect the most vulnerable from infection and limit their exposure to others;
 - Cough into a tissue or your sleeve.
- It is critical that these measures be maintained.



- Healthcare workers need medical masks, including surgical masks, procedural masks and respiratory masks such as N95s. It is extremely important that we reserve these masks for healthcare workers, as they are urgently needed for medical procedures and to care for individuals who have COVID-19.
- There is no evidence that wearing a non-medical mask (e.g., made of handmade fabric) in the community protects the person wearing it.
- Our goal is to stop the spread of COVID-19 by any means possible. In light of new information on both presymptomatic and asymptomatic transmission, wearing a non-medical mask, even in the absence of symptoms, is an additional measure that can be taken to help protect others for brief periods when physical distancing is impossible (e.g., at the grocery store or in cramped places, such as public transit).
- Wearing a non-medical mask in the community is not a replacement for following proven public health measures. No mask can replace physical distancing.
- All recommendations concerning physical distancing, frequent hand washing and home isolation are based on practices recognized as the most effective 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 to cover your mouth and nose to prevent your respiratory droplets from contaminating others or landing on surfaces.
- Like covering your mouth with a tissue or your sleeve when coughing, a cloth mask or face shield can reduce the risk of exposing others to your respiratory droplets.

Factors to consider when wearing a non-medical mask

- If wearing a non-medical mask makes you feel safe and prevents you from touching your nose and mouth, that's a good thing. However, remember not to touch or rub your eyes, as they are also an infection route.
- Canadians must understand the benefits and limitations of masks. If they choose to wear a non-medical mask, they must use it safely by
 - avoiding moving or adjusting it often;
 - avoiding sharing it with other people; and
 - ensuring that it is made to completely cover the nose and mouth and fit snugly to the face, held in place with ear loops or with ties behind the head and neck.
- It's equally important to be aware that masks can be contaminated when going outside or handling them.
- Children under the age of two and people who have breathing difficulties, are unconscious or are unable to remove a mask on their own should not wear non-medical masks or other face coverings.



- Note that non-medical masks do not prevent the spread of COVID-19 if hygiene and public health guidelines, including frequent hand washing and physical distancing, are not strictly followed at all times.
- The Canada.ca/coronavirus website is updated regularly and contains information on measures to take, such as washing your hands when putting on or removing the mask. The site also includes information on how to wash cloth masks and safely dispose of other non-medical masks (including dust masks).

Travel health notices

- The Public Health Agency of Canada publishes travel health advisories to inform Canadians of increased or unexpected health risks in a country or region outside of Canada.
- Travel health advisories also provide information about precautions to take to reduce risks.
- The following points are taken into consideration when adding countries or areas to the list of regions affected by COVID-19:
 - the disease has spread to numerous people in the community (multiple clusters – not all cases are in a defined context, such as a household).
 - evidence of geographic spread.
 - ability to link cases to an exposure (i.e. to another case or due to travel to a country where COVID-19 continues to spread).
- The List of regions affected by COVID-19 at Canada.ca/coronavirus includes all countries with travel health advisories regarding COVID-19.

Cottage season and COVID-19

- Public health recommendations are continuously adapting to the rapidly evolving pandemic situation due to the fact that we are learning new things about COVID-19 every day.
- Based on the available evidence, we ask Canadians to help limit the spread of COVID-19 by avoiding non-essential travel—especially to small and rural communities, where healthcare systems could easily be overwhelmed.
- For this reason, we urge everyone not to go to a cottage, campground, or vacation property during the COVID-19 pandemic.
 - Unless the property is your principal residence, or in the same community as your principal residence, you should wait until the situation in Canada changes before going.



- If you get sick, you may not be able to get the help you need. Stopping for gas or provisions on the way increases your risk of exposure and, if you're asymptomatic, you could pass on the virus to others.
- An influx of people into a small community can also threaten the supply of food and other essentials for residents.
- If you must go to your cottage for insurance reasons, you should only make a round trip, then go straight home.
- Canadians must continue doing everything they can to flatten the curve and ensure the health of friends and families. That includes staying home.

OIC 10 – Mandatory isolation

- The Government of Canada's top priority is the health and safety of Canadians. We are taking unprecedented measures to fight the COVID-19 epidemic. One of those measures is continuously assessing risks in order to adapt our response accordingly.
- The Emergency Order issued by the Government of Canada under the *Quarantine Act* already requires individuals entering Canada by air, land or sea to self-isolate for 14 days if displaying symptoms of COVID-19 or quarantine for 14 days if they are asymptomatic to limit the spread of the disease.
- An updated Order in Council is issued to clarify terminology. It is based on new scientific information showing that asymptomatic people can spread the virus.
- Under the updated Order, travellers arriving in Canada, symptomatic or not, cannot self-isolate or quarantine themselves (when applicable) in the same place as vulnerable people, or people with pre-existing medical conditions, such as adults 65 years of age or older.
- In addition, each traveller needs to confirm that they can self-isolate or quarantine in a suitable place where they have access to essential goods such as food and medication. Travellers need to make arrangements for self-isolation or quarantine prior to arriving in Canada. Travellers without a suitable place to isolate or quarantine must go to a location designated by the Chief Public Health Officer of Canada. These are new criteria that apply to asymptomatic travellers.
- Compliance with this Order is mandatory for anyone entering Canada on or after April 15, 2020.
- If symptomatic travellers do not have private transportation or an appropriate place to isolate, they must isolate in a location designated by the Chief Public Health Officer of Canada for 14 days.
- Asymptomatic travellers are still at risk of infecting others and must wear **a non-medical mask or face shield (i.e., made to completely cover the nose and mouth and fit snugly to**



the face, held in place with ear loops or with ties behind the head and neck) on the way to their destination where they are required to quarantine for 14 days. They must also follow the public health authority's instructions designated by the 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 arriving in Canada are also required to wear a non-medical mask or face covering while proceeding to their final destination where they will isolate, or when they cannot stay more than two metres away from other people.
- Asymptomatic travellers who do not have an appropriate location where they can self-isolate or quarantine are subject to the same requirements as symptomatic travellers and must go to a location designated by the Chief Public Health Officer of Canada.
- Certain people who cross the border regularly to ensure the continued flow of goods and essential services, as well as individuals who receive or provide other essential services to Canadians, are exempt from self-isolating due to travel outside of Canada, as long as they are asymptomatic (i.e., do not have symptoms of COVID-19).
- Those exempted must wear a non-medical mask or face shield while travelling to their final destination. Upon arrival at their destination, individuals exempt from the Order must practise physical distancing, consider wearing a mask or any other face covering when physical distancing at two metres from others is not possible, 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.
- This decision was based on the latest scientific data and discussions we have had with the provinces and territories.
- These supplementary measures will contribute to containing the outbreak and preventing further spread of COVID-19 in Canada.
- They also help protect elderly people and people with pre-existing medical conditions who are at greater risk of developing severe health complications related to COVID-19.
- The Government of Canada continues to work closely with regional, provincial, territorial and international partners to limit the introduction of COVID-19.

Enforcement of the Act

- Spot checks are conducted by the Government of Canada to ensure compliance.
- Penalties for non-compliance with this Order include a maximum fine of up to \$750,000, six months of imprisonment, or both.
- A person who causes a risk of imminent death or serious bodily harm to another person while deliberately or recklessly contravening the *Quarantine Act* could be liable to a fine of up to \$1 million, up to three years of imprisonment, or both.



- Amendments to offences specified in the *Contraventions Regulations (Quarantine Act)* are underway. These offences will be designated as contraventions subject to fines.
- The fine amounts could range between \$75 and \$1,000. For a contravention committed by a young person, the fine is \$100.

Designated quarantine facilities

- The Chief Public Health Officer has designated quarantine facilities, such as hotels, across the country, including in Vancouver, Calgary, Toronto and Montreal.
- Under section 7 of the *Quarantine Act*, the Chief Public Health Officer may designate any place in Canada as a quarantine facility in order to protect the health of Canadians, if considered necessary.

Border measures

- The Government of Canada is continuing to establish 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 diseases in Canada, including COVID-19.
- The Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) is working closely with the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) to help prevent the spread of the 2019 novel coronavirus into Canada at all international ports of entry.
- PHAC must advise 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 control measures.
- To protect Canadians and to ease the potential burden non-essential travellers could place on our healthcare system and its front-line workers, CBSA has implemented new travel restrictions across all points 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
 - Foreign nationals entering from the U.S. with signs or symptoms of respiratory illness

**There are exceptions to the bans that are described in the Orders in Council.*



- Canada and the US have also entered into a mutual agreement to send back all asylum seekers. Exceptions can be made in unique circumstances, such as in the case of an unaccompanied minor.
- Every person entering Canada—regardless of their country of origin or mode of entry—is required to self-isolate for 14 days.
- There are exemptions to mandatory self-isolation to ensure that critical infrastructure, essential services and economic supply chains continue between Canada and the USA. Workers who are essential to our economy and infrastructure are permitted to enter Canada. They include 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. CBSA is working with other federal partners to share information with commercial stakeholders and provide reassurance that commercial traffic is unimpeded.

Non-essential travel restrictions (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, 12:01 a.m. EST, there is a temporary 30-day restriction on all non-essential travel between the Canada–U.S. border. This initial period of 30 days is renewable.
- All travel of an optional or discretionary nature, including tourism and recreation, are affected by these measures. Travel for people in good health who need to cross the border to go to work or for other essential purposes, such as medical care, will continue.
- Examples of essential travel purposes:
 - Crossing the border for work or 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
 - Other activities deemed essential at the discretion of the border services officer
- Canadian citizens, permanent residents and Registered Indians under the *Indian Act* enter Canada by right. They are provided with a pamphlet from the Public Health Agency of Canada which advises travellers that they must self-isolate for 14 days from the date they enter Canada.

Canada will also implement measures in airports to:



- reinforce health screening
- increase presence to conduct further health screenings and public interventions
- increase signage throughout the arrival areas to encourage travellers to follow the latest public health guidance
- prevent all travellers who have symptoms of COVID-19, regardless of their citizenship, from boarding international flights to Canada
 - airlines will conduct a basic health assessment on all travellers based on the directives from the Public Health Agency of Canada
- This includes making information readily available and raising awareness among **all** travellers concerning what they should do if they develop symptoms of COVID-19. In addition, we continue to advise travellers coming from any destination to self-monitor for signs and symptoms of COVID-19.
- We continue to monitor and assess the global risk associated with 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 concerning increased risk levels.
- We continue to advise Canadians who have travelled abroad to monitor their health upon their return to the country. If you get sick and must visit a healthcare professional, it is good practice to call beforehand to let them know where you have been.

Updates to Orders 7 and 9 – Minimizing the Risk of Exposure to COVID-19 in Canada (Prohibition of Entry into Canada from any Country other than the United States) and Minimizing the Risk of Exposure to COVID-19 in Canada (Prohibition of Entry into Canada from the United States)

- Foreign nationals authorized to enter Canada now include temporary foreign workers, certain students and those delivering emergency medical supplies.
- All foreign nationals permitted to enter Canada are required to meet the Emergency Order requirements made under the *Quarantine Act*. This includes mandatory quarantine for 14 days upon entering Canada unless they have received a specific exemption. They must also comply with provincial and territorial emergency health orders.
- People with exemptions are not allowed to enter Canada if they suffer from symptoms of COVID-19 or if they are seeking entry into Canada for optional or discretionary reasons.
- Temporary foreign workers are necessary to ensure the resilience of our food industry and supply chain in order for all Canadians to have access to food and other essential products during this pandemic.
- *Minimizing the Risk of Exposure to COVID-19 in Canada Order (Prohibition of Entry into Canada from any Country other than the United States)* took effect at noon (Eastern Daylight Time) on March 18, 2020, and ends at noon (Eastern Daylight Time) on June 30, 2020.



- *Minimizing the Risk of Exposure to COVID-19 in Canada Order (Prohibition of Entry into Canada from the United States)* took effect at 12:00:01 a.m. (Eastern Daylight Time) on March 21, 2020, and ends at 12:00:01 a.m. (Eastern Daylight Time) on April 21, 2020.
- Because these two decrees are complementary, they apply together during their period of overlap.
- These new measures help prevent the spread of the disease in Canada while guaranteeing that essential travel and supply chains are not disrupted.
- Failure to comply with these Orders is an offence under the *Quarantine Act*. Maximum penalties include a fine of up to \$750,000, six months of imprisonment, or both. Any person who deliberately or recklessly contravenes this Act or the regulations and causes a risk of imminent death or serious bodily harm to another person shall be liable to a fine not exceeding \$1 million, imprisonment for a term not exceeding three years, or both.

General message on essential travel to Canada by foreign nationals via the United States

- Essential travel continues without restriction. Both governments recognize the importance of maintaining vital supply chains between the two countries. These supply chains ensure that food, fuel and essential pharmaceuticals reach people on both sides of the border.

If pressed

Foreign nationals listed below may enter Canada:

- Persons with a valid work permit or application that was approved under the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act*
- Persons with a valid study permit that was approved under the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act* before March 18, 2020
- Persons permitted to work in Canada as a student in a health field under paragraph 186(p) of the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Regulations*
- Persons whose application for permanent residence was approved under the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act* before March 18, 2020
- Canadian citizens' and permanent residents' immediate family
- Registered Indians as defined under the *Indian Act*
- Those authorized by consular services to enter Canada for the purpose of reuniting immediate family members;
- Transportation crews (e.g., air, boat, etc.) or workers on marine vessels
- Diplomats
- Individuals invited by Canada for the purpose of assisting in the COVID-19 response
- Individuals on military flights or other persons supporting the Canadian military
- French citizens who reside in Saint-Pierre and Miquelon and have only been to Saint-Pierre and Miquelon, the United States or Canada during the 14-day period before the day on which they arrived to Canada
- Persons whose entry is in the national interest in terms of public safety and emergency preparedness



- Persons who provide essential services or who are essential for the transport of goods, such as truck drivers and marine carriers
- Emergency service workers
- Registered healthcare practitioners with proof of employment in Canada
- Persons seeking to enter Canada for the purpose of delivering, maintaining or repairing necessary medical equipment or instruments;
- Persons who enter Canada for the purpose of making urgent medical deliveries of cells, blood and blood products, tissues, organs or other similar body parts, that are required for patient care in Canada
- Persons who, in the opinion of the Chief Public Health Officer of Canada, do not pose a risk of significant harm to public health

Health Screening of Canadian travellers returning to Canada

- As part of Canada's enhanced border measures to restrict further introduction and spread of COVID-19, airlines conduct a health check on all travellers before they board 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 are screened for the following symptoms by the airline crew:
 - Fever
 - Cough
 - Difficulty breathing
- If an airline observes a traveller with symptoms or if the passenger answers yes to any of the health check questions, the airline will not allow them to board for 14 days or until they provide a medical certificate confirming that their symptoms are not related to COVID-19.
- Travellers who are denied boarding will be provided with further instructions advising them to follow the guidance of local public health authorities. Those travellers are also referred to the appropriate consular services.
- These measures help protect the health of all Canadians.

Concerning health checks

- Airline staff will be instructed to maintain distance between themselves and travellers at all times, and to encourage travellers to do so as well.
- Airline staff will verify whether travellers show symptoms of COVID-19 and ask every traveller if they have a fever, a cough or difficulty breathing.
- They also ask whether travellers have been denied boarding in the past 14 days due to a medical reason related to COVID-19.



- Travellers can provide a medical certificate certifying that any symptoms they have are unrelated to COVID-19.
- These measures apply to travellers, not flight crew members.

Concerning Enforcement

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

When you arrive in Canada

- All travellers found to be symptomatic during a flight are met by border services officers upon arrival at a Canadian airport. Officers keep them away from other passengers and escort them to public health personnel, who then assume responsibility for them.
- All persons arriving in Canada at an air, land, marine or rail port of entry are asked about the purpose of their visit and whether they are feeling ill or unwell. The border services officer may ask additional questions to determine whether the travel is essential or non-essential.
- CBSA officers check for signs of illness and refer any traveller suspected of being ill to the Public Health Agency of Canada for further medical assessment, regardless of how travellers respond to screening questions.
- All travellers—regardless of their country of origin or mode of entry—are assessed upon arrival to Canada. Entry screening is one of a number of important public health tools during periods of uncertainty. It is part of a multi-level 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 provide symptomatic travellers with a kit that includes a surgical mask and instructions on how to use it.
- 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 of all air, land, rail and sea ports of entry:
 - “Do you currently have a cough, have difficulty breathing, or feel feverish?”
 - “I/we acknowledge that I/we must self-isolate for 14 days to prevent the potential spread of COVID-19.”
- CBSA Officers do not only query travellers on the state of their health; they are also trained to observe visible signs of illness. They will redirect any traveller whom they suspect is ill, regardless of how the traveller responded to the health screening question.



- Travellers showing symptoms of COVID-19 are redirected to a PHAC staff member for further assessment.
- These travellers are provided with a kit that includes a mask, instructions and a pamphlet on mandatory isolation.
- All travellers entering Canada are given a pamphlet from the Public Health Agency of Canada with instructions to self-isolate for 14 days. Symptomatic people are given a red pamphlet, and asymptomatic people are given a green pamphlet.

Restrictions on travel in the North

- COVID-19 is a serious health threat, and the situation evolves on a daily basis.
- As of March 24, cases have been diagnosed in the Northwest Territories and Yukon.
- Efforts are underway in northern Canada to ensure that governments are prepared.
- Provincial and territorial governments have declared either a state of emergency or a public health emergency.
- These measures can be implemented to establish travel restrictions within the country to prevent a major impact on the healthcare system for the province or territory.
- At the federal level, we recommend that Canadians stay home if possible. This also means avoiding non-essential travel within the country.
- If you have to leave your home, practise physical distancing, wash your hands frequently, and stay home if you feel ill.

Marine Sector Health in Canadian Waters

- The Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) is closely monitoring the situation regarding sick crew members of the *Siem Cicero*, a cargo ship from Germany carrying non-essential cargo (cars) currently off the coast of Halifax, Nova Scotia.
- On March 17, the Centralized Notification System (CNS) advised PHAC that several crew members were experiencing symptoms similar to those of COVID-19.
- To protect the health and safety of Canadians, PHAC denied the ships entry into the port under section 39 of the *Quarantine Act*.
- Canada's ports play an important role in the economy and international trade. The marine transportation sectors on the Atlantic, Pacific and Arctic coasts are prepared to deal with the increased risks associated with COVID-19.



- PHAC is working closely with partners, particularly Transport Canada and local authorities, to limit the spread of the virus.
- We continue to monitor the situation and will inform the crew at a later date if the vessel will be allowed to enter the harbour. In making this decision, several factors will be considered, including the completion by all crew members of a 14-day self-isolation period beginning on the date when the symptoms appeared in the last reported case.

If pressed on measures taken by PHAC to limit the spread of COVID-19 on board a ship in Canadian waters

- If a ship is still in international waters, the quarantine officer advises individuals who are ill and the people they were in close contact with to isolate themselves in their cabins.
- Depending on the situation, officials could order the vessel to deny disembarkation of passengers or crew until all public health activities are completed, under the *Quarantine Act*.
- To minimize the risk of spreading COVID-19 in Canada, officials review the situation to determine the most appropriate measures to take with respect to passengers and crew members who do not demonstrate any symptoms of the disease.

Cruise ships MS Zaandam and MS Rotterdam

- We know that 97 Canadian passengers and a Canadian crew member are on board the cruise ship MS Zaandam. We also know that another 150 Canadian passengers were transferred to the cruise ship MS Rotterdam.
- To date, there have been no confirmed cases of COVID-19 among Canadian citizens aboard the two vessels.
- Cruise ships are currently docked at the Everglades Port in Florida, and passengers who are deemed fit to travel will disembark over the next few days and fly home.
- A charter plane will transport the passengers from the United States to Toronto.
- Passengers will be assessed prior to boarding the aircraft and upon arrival in Canada.



- Upon their return to Canada, passengers from the MS Zaandam and MS Rotterdam are subject to the Emergency Order under the *Quarantine Act*, which imposes mandatory quarantine (self-isolation) for 14 days.
- Travellers who are still asymptomatic upon arrival in Toronto are allowed to take public transportation (plane, train, car, bus, etc.) to their final destination for their 14-day quarantine period. Masks are provided to all asymptomatic travellers as an extra precaution in case they develop symptoms before their arrival at home.
- Public health measures for passengers on the MS Zaandam and MS Rotterdam are consistent with those in effect for Canadian citizens returning from abroad.
- Passengers with symptoms are not allowed to board the return flight to Canada. They must remain on the cruise ship until they are considered cured or be transferred to the healthcare system in Florida.

Asymptomatic Travellers

- Cruise ship passengers who are asymptomatic are allowed to disembark from the cruise ship and travel by bus to the airport, where they are assessed prior to boarding the charter flight to Canada (Toronto Pearson Airport).
- Upon arrival in Canada, all travellers are assessed by a quarantine officer and ordered to quarantine for 14 days.
- Travellers who are still asymptomatic upon arrival in Toronto are allowed to take public transportation (plane, train, car, bus, etc.) to their final destination for their 14-day quarantine period. Masks are provided to all asymptomatic travellers as an extra precaution in case they develop symptoms before arriving home.
- Asymptomatic travellers must not self-isolate or quarantine themselves in the same place as particularly vulnerable people, such as adults 65 years of age or older and people of all ages with underlying health problems.
- Some asymptomatic travellers may be taken to a designated quarantine facility if, for example, their home situation is not suitable for quarantine and no alternative is available (e.g., a seniors' residence or retirement home). Each situation will be assessed individually.
- Travellers are still at risk of developing symptoms and infecting others. The Public Health Agency of Canada will conduct daily health assessments by telephone.
- The Public Health Agency of Canada works with federal and provincial partners to ensure compliance with the Emergency Order.



- Travellers are required to self-monitor for symptoms, record their body temperature and communicate that information during health assessments.

Symptomatic Travellers

- Passengers on the cruise ship who present symptoms are not allowed to fly back to Canada; they must remain on the ship until they are considered cured or be transferred to the healthcare system in Florida.
- Travellers who develop symptoms during the flight will be transported directly to a hospital or designated quarantine facility upon disembarkation.

NOTE: There are other messages about the mandatory 14-day quarantine, including public health advice for returning travellers.

If pressed on law enforcement [messages already approved]

- The Government of Canada conducts spot checks to ensure compliance with the law.
- The Public Health Agency of Canada works with federal and provincial partners to ensure compliance with the Emergency Order.
- Failure to comply with the Order is an offence under the *Quarantine Act*. Maximum penalties include a fine of \$750,000 and six months of imprisonment.
- In addition, a person who causes a risk of imminent death or serious bodily harm to another person while deliberately or recklessly contravening this Act or its regulations could be liable to a maximum fine of \$1 million, up to three years of imprisonment, or both.

If pressed on Trenton

- Canada's response had a different focus in early February, when outbreaks of COVID-19 were first reported on board cruise ships.
- When Canadian passengers on the other cruise ships were repatriated and then quarantined at Canadian Forces Base (CFB) Trenton and the NAV Centre in Cornwall, Ontario, there was no Emergency Order in effect requiring all travellers to be quarantined for 14 days upon arrival in Canada.

Mass gatherings

- Mass gatherings occur in a range of public places such as spiritual and cultural settings, theatres, sports centres, festivals and conference rooms.



- They result in a large number of people being in close contact for an extended period of time.
- The Public Health Agency of Canada advises that gatherings of 50 people or more should be cancelled or postponed.
- Organizers should consult their local public health authorities, who may set other criteria depending on specific circumstances.
- Older adults and people with underlying medical conditions should reconsider attending these gatherings whether they are large assemblies or smaller events in crowded or enclosed settings.
- If symptoms appear (fever, a cough or difficulty breathing), do not attend mass gatherings or events, and avoid public gathering places. You could jeopardize a vulnerable person's health.
- The Public Health Agency of Canada has posted a risk-informed decision-making [tool](https://www.canada.ca/coronavirus) on [Canada.ca/coronavirus](https://www.canada.ca/coronavirus) to help public health authorities and event organizers work together to determine public health risks and actions to take concerning mass gatherings.
- If the virus causing COVID-19 spreads within a community, individuals should consider avoiding non-essential gatherings, running errands outside of peak hours and increasing physical distance from others to 2 metres, when possible.

COVID-19 outbreak at the Willowdale Welcome Centre

- The Government of Canada is aware that cases of COVID-19 have been reported at the Willowdale Welcome Centre in Toronto.
- The Public Health Agency of Canada is working closely with provincial health partners in Ontario to monitor the situation.
- Our partners at Toronto Public Health and the City of Toronto are working closely with the Willowdale Welcome Centre by providing advice and responding to this specific outbreak.
- Canada continues to focus its public health efforts on containment. It is screening cases, tracing close contacts and implementing a range of public health measures to limit the spread and impact of COVID-19.

Questions concerning refugee status claims in Canada

- In mid-March, the Government of Canada and its refugee resettlement partners—the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the



International Organization for Migration (IOM)—suspended the Refugee Resettlement Program for refugees impacted by travel restrictions. Refugee resettlement will resume when conditions permit.