

January 24, 2020

Memo

To: Community Partners

Re: Planning in Place to Prevent Spread of Flu Like Illness, including Coronavirus

Respiratory season is upon us and we are experiencing high levels of influenza and influenza-like illness (ILI) in our communities. Our local emergency departments are seeing an increase in patients with respiratory illness, and many of our Long-Term Care and Retirement Homes are in respiratory outbreaks caused by influenza or ILI. Influenza A and Influenza B have been lab confirmed across the province of Ontario and within our community. Outside of Canada, a new virus (the 2019-Novel Coronavirus, or 2019-nCoV) not previously seen in humans, has been reported as the cause of several pneumonia cases originating in Wuhan, China.

The 2019-Novel Coronavirus

Cases of the 2019-Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV) have now been reported in Thailand, Taiwan, Japan, South Korea, Singapore and the United States. Symptoms of the 2019-Novel Coronavirus illness have ranged from mild cold-like symptoms to severe illness with fever, cough, difficulty breathing and pneumonia.

At this time, there have been no identified cases of the 2019-Novel Coronavirus in Canada, and according to Public Health Ontario, the risk of the 2019-Novel Coronavirus in Ontario is currently considered low. Hastings Prince Edward Public Health is working closely with Public Health Ontario and the Ministry of Health to monitor any changes in the situation. We are working proactively to prepare for any potential cases and protect our community.

Preventing the Spread of Illness

By taking the following steps, you can help prevent the spread of illness in our community.

- Wash your hands frequently
- Cough and sneeze into the bend of your arm, not into your hand(s)
- Avoid touching your nose, mouth or eyes with your hands
- Clean objects and surfaces that a lot of people touch, such as: doorknobs, phones and television remotes
- Eat healthy foods and stay physically active to keep your immune system strong

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- Get plenty of rest or sleep
- Get your influenza vaccine
- Stay home when you are sick, and avoid contact with other people until your symptoms are gone
- If you suspect you are sick, avoid visiting people in Long-Term Care, or individuals with health concerns

When to See a Doctor

- If you have fever, cough and/or shortness of breath, seek medical care through your health care provider or walk-in clinic, or if necessary, at the Emergency Department
- Visit the Emergency Department if you have severe symptoms of respiratory illness such as difficulty breathing or shortness of breath when doing very little
- When seeking medical attention and you are experiencing respiratory symptoms, always protect others by putting on a mask as soon as you arrive
- If you are unwell and have recently travelled outside of Canada it is important to alert your health care provider

The Role of Public Health

Hastings Prince Edward Public Health is continuously working in our community to identify, prevent, and control the spread of infectious disease. Public Health Ontario, in partnership with the Ministry of Health, is working to develop guidance specific to this 2019-Novel Coronavirus.

We continue to work proactively to prepare for any potential cases, and protect our community. We are conducting ongoing local surveillance to ensure any suspected cases are promptly identified and managed appropriately. We are working with local health care providers, hospitals, and schools to strengthen regular infection control processes, and we have systems and protocols in place to be implemented in response to situations, as required.

Questions or Concerns?

We have established a web page dedicated to providing updates about this 2019-Novel Coronavirus at hpePublicHealth.ca, and are committed to providing up-to-date information and guidance as soon as it becomes available. For more information, please visit our website, hpePublicHealth.ca, or contact us at 613-966-5500 x 349.

Kind regards,



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