

**Novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV) update**

Vancouver Coastal Health and its partners continue to monitor the evolving coronavirus situation (named 2019-nCoV) which originated in Wuhan City, China. At this time, the risk to Canadians continues to be low. VCH remains vigilant for suspected cases of 2019-nCoV by working together with our provincial, federal and international partners. The situation is evolving rapidly and the screening and testing criteria are expected to change over time.

While many travellers present with respiratory illness during the winter months, the vast majority of patients will have other common viral or bacterial etiologies. The Public Health Agency of Canada has updated its guidance on the screening, management and investigation of patients. Please call your local **Medical Health Officer** if a patient presents with the following history:

- Fever or acute respiratory illness **AND**
- History of travel to Hubei province (including Wuhan City), China within 14 days of symptom **OR** close contact with a confirmed or probable case of 2019-nCoV/ ill person with history of travel to Hubei **AND**
- No clear alternative diagnosis

For patients meeting these criteria:

- Offer them a surgical mask and place them in a separate room.
- Use contact and droplet precautions during sample collection. This includes gloves, gowns, surgical mask and eye protection. An N95 respirator is NOT necessary.
- Obtain a nasopharyngeal and/or throat swab using a red or blue topped COPAN swab with UTM, pictured below



- Ensure samples are promptly sent to BCCDC Provincial Laboratory.
- If the patient is well enough to return home, they may be discharged with a surgical mask and advised to isolate at home until contacted by our VCH Public Health team.

**Please ensure that you notify the Medical Health Officer on call while the patient is still present in the office in case further testing or precautions are indicated.** If you identify other reasons to consider your patient at a high index of suspicion for 2019-nCoV outside of the case criteria presented above, please contact your Medical Health Officer to discuss.

A Medical Health Officer is available 24/7 for guidance on appropriate testing and precautions. We can be reached during business hours at 604-675-3900 or after-hours at 604-527-4893.

For up-to-date information, please visit: <http://www.bccdc.ca/health-professionals/data-reports/communicable-diseases/emerging-respiratory-virus-updates>

You can reach a Medical Health Officer in Vancouver at 604.675.3900 Toll free at 1.855.675.3900  
For public health emergencies after hours contact the Medical Health Officer on call at 604.527.4893

Vancouver Medical Health Officers

Dr. Patricia Daly (Chief Medical Health Officer)

Dr. John Harding, Dr. Althea Hayden, Dr. James Lu, Dr. Mark Lysyshyn, Dr. Michael Schwandt

To receive Physicians' Updates by email please contact us at: [vchregistrationcdc@vch.ca](mailto:vchregistrationcdc@vch.ca)