

## Novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV): Updated Guidance for Testing

Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH) and its partners continue to monitor the novel coronavirus situation (2019-nCoV; also named Covid-19). The four cases identified in VCH are being appropriately managed and there is no ongoing risk to the public. In order to remain vigilant to prevent spread in Canada, **the national criteria for testing have been updated by the Public Health Agency of Canada (Box A below).**

While many travellers present with respiratory illness during the winter months, the vast majority of patients will have other common viral or bacterial infections. Any physician may now order 2019-nCoV testing in VCH without consulting the local Medical Health Officer (MHO). **We are asking that physicians only notify a VCH MHO of patients where there is a high index of suspicion for 2019-nCoV infection (Box B below).** Notification of the MHO will allow for priority testing of the sample and early public health intervention. For patients tested who do not meet the criteria in Box B, the ordering physician will be responsible for providing advice to the patient to self-isolate pending testing results and for informing them if the result is negative (See the page below for patient handout on self-isolation).

### Box A: New Public Health Agency of Canada recommendations for 2019-CoV testing:

Patients with compatible symptoms (e.g. fever, cough or difficulty breathing) **AND**

Travel to **mainland China** within 14 days of symptom onset **OR**

Close contact with a confirmed or probable case of 2019-nCoV **AND**

No clear alternative diagnosis

### Box B: Notify the Medical Health Officer only for cases where there is a high index of suspicion. This includes patients with respiratory presentations **AND**

Travel to Hubei province in China within 14 days of symptom onset **OR**

Close contact with a confirmed or probable case of 2019-nCoV within 14 days of symptom onset **OR**

Severe respiratory illness requiring admission to hospital in a patient who has travelled to mainland China within 14 days of symptom onset

### For all patients tested:

- 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)
- Send samples to the BCCDC Provincial Laboratory and ensure that the requisition indicates testing for "novel coronavirus" (for consultation regarding testing, please call the BCCDC PHL Medical Microbiologist on-call at 604-661-7033)
- To order the nasopharyngeal viral test kit, please visit: <http://www.bccdc.ca/resource-gallery/Documents/Guidelines%20and%20Forms/Forms/Labs/PHLOrderForm.pdf>



### Discharge planning:

- If the patient is well enough to return home, discharge the patient with a surgical mask and advise the patient to isolate at home until they receive a test result. Please give the patient the information on self-isolation provided on the page below.
- Confirm the patient's contact information. Clinicians should make arrangements to notify patients of novel coronavirus results so that patients can stop self-isolation if swab results are negative. Should the swab results be positive, Public Health will provide follow-up.

You can reach a Medical Health Officer 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 Coastal Health Medical Health Officers

Chief Medical Health Officer: Dr. Patricia Daly

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

Richmond: Dr. Meena Dawar | North Shore: Dr. Mark Lysyshyn | Coastal Rural: Dr. Geoff McKee

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

## **Information on the novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV) for patients being tested and cared for in the community**

Your doctor has determined that you can safely be cared for at home. To prevent the spread of contagious respiratory illnesses including novel coronavirus, we advise that you **self-isolate at home** until your test results are complete.

**You will receive your coronavirus test results within the next 2-3 days from your doctor (if you were tested in the community) or from public health or the lab (if you were tested in an Emergency Department).**

If you have not received a call with your test result after three days, contact your doctor or VCH Public Health for your test results. VCH Public Health can be reached at 604-675-3900.

### **Instructions for self-isolation:**

- 1) Stay home while you are sick** – Just as when you have the flu, you should stay home when you are sick. Do not go to work, or school. Cancel non-urgent appointments. However, you can still leave home for essential purchases, such as getting groceries. If you do go out while you are still sick, it is best if you wear a mask (see point #2 below). Your doctor may provide you with a note excusing you from work or school.
- 2) Wear a face mask** – Wear a face mask when you are in the same room with other people and when you visit a health care facility. If your mask gets wet or dirty, change it. Please note: A face mask refers to a surgical/procedure mask. N95 respirator masks are not required by the patient or household contacts.
- 3) Separate yourself from other people in your home** – Stay and sleep in a well-ventilated room separate from other people. Use a separate bathroom if available. Use a face mask in shared spaces. Household members should stay in another home or place of residence if possible. Restrict visitors. However, it is ok to have friends/family drop off food or you can use delivery/pick up services for errands such as grocery shopping.
- 4) Do not prepare food for others in your household**
- 5) Avoid sharing household items** - Do not share dishes, cups, eating utensils, towels, bedding, or other items with people in your home. After using these items, wash them thoroughly with soap and water.
- 6) Cover your coughs and sneezes** – Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough/sneeze, or cough/sneeze into your sleeve instead of your hand. Throw used tissues into a lined trash can in your room before disposal with other household waste. Immediately wash your hands.
- 7) Wash your hands** – Wash your hands often and thoroughly with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use disposable paper towels when possible. For more information on handwashing see <https://www.healthlinkbc.ca/healthlinkbc-files/hand-washing>. If soap and water are not available, use alcohol-based sanitizer, however, always wash your hands with soap and water after using the toilet. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- 8) Flush toilet with the lid down** – the virus may also be present in stool.
- 9) Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces** – Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces (e.g. counters, tabletops, doorknobs, bathroom fixtures, toilets, phones, keyboards, tablets, and bedside tables) once per day with regular household disinfectant or a solution containing 1 part bleach to 9 parts water.
- 10) Notify health care facilities before you visit** – Call ahead before visiting a health care facility, and advise them that you have or are being tested for novel coronavirus. Also be sure to inform health care providers when you arrive. This will help health care facilities to take steps to keep other people from becoming infected.
- 11) Monitor your symptoms** – Seek medical attention if you have trouble breathing, are unable to tolerate fluids, or if your illness is worsening. Notify health care facilities and health care providers (e.g. emergency departments, ambulance paramedics, doctor's offices) before you visit.

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