

February 21, 2020

Novel Coronavirus Update

We are writing to give you updated information on the novel coronavirus (COVID-19), a new virus causing respiratory illness. Yesterday, Health Minister Dix and Provincial Health Officer Dr. Bonnie Henry announced the first presumptive case of novel coronavirus in Fraser Health, the 6th in British Columbia. Fraser Health Public Health is currently monitoring the patient, following up directly with all contacts of the case, and advising self-isolation.

Contacts of this case may have attended school in the region and are currently isolated. These contacts were not showing any signs or symptoms of illness while attending school, and remain well. There is no public health risk at schools in the region. There is also no evidence that novel coronavirus is circulating in the community.

At this time, we are not recommending testing or assessment for anyone who may have been in contact with this (or any) asymptomatic individual, regardless of travel or contact history. The risk to British Columbians remains low.

In the meantime, we are reminding everyone to follow proper respiratory hygiene etiquette during the cold and flu season. This includes:

- Proper hand washing for at least 20 seconds using soap and water.
- Alcohol-based hand rubs to clean hands if they are not visibly soiled.
- Do not touch your face/eyes/mouth with unwashed hands.
- Cover your mouth and nose when you sneeze or cough with a disposable tissue or the crease of your elbow.
- Stay at home when you are sick

At this time, the recommendations from the Ministry of Health for assessment and testing of novel coronavirus (COVID-19) have not changed, although our knowledge of this virus continues to grow, and we are using new information to adjust our public health recommendations.

- Students or staff, who have been in close contact with someone who has been diagnosed with COVID-19 should consider staying home for 14 days after their last encounter. Individuals should monitor themselves daily for symptoms like fever and cough.
- Students or staff returning from Hubei Province, China consider staying home for 14 days after they left Hubei. They should monitor themselves daily for symptoms like fever or cough. Parents should assist children as needed.
- Students or staff who have been in other parts of China (outside Hubei Province) should monitor themselves daily for symptoms like fever or cough for 14 days.



Those who develop symptoms should stay home and call their health-care provider or 8-1-1 to discuss any need for testing and follow up.

For more information on Coronavirus, please see www.fraserhealth.ca/health-topics-a-to-z/coronavirus#.XIBDvmaouUk. Anyone concerned about respiratory systems should stay home and call their health-care provider or 8-1-1 to discuss any need for testing and follow up.

Yours Truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Aamir Bharmal", is written over a light grey rectangular background.

Dr. Aamir Bharmal, MD MPH CCFP FRCPC
Medical Health Officer-Medical Director
Communicable Disease and Harm Reduction
Fraser Health