Frequently Asked Questions about 2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)

British Columbia has declared a state of emergency and a public health emergency. Public health officials in the province are closely monitoring the situation as it evolves and will continue to notify the public as response measures change in B.C.

Anyone who is concerned they may have been exposed to, or are experiencing symptoms of, the coronavirus should use the BC COVID-19 symptom and self-assessment tool online at: https://covid19.thrive.health/ to determine if you need to be tested. You do not need to be tested if you do not have symptoms or you only have mild symptoms that can be managed at home.

If you have a fever, a new cough or difficulty breathing, call 8-1-1 for guidance.

For more information and latest updates on novel coronavirus (COVID-19), follow the BC Centre for Disease Control on Twitter @CDoFBC or visit the website: http://www.bccdc.ca/covid19
For the latest B.C. government statement on COVID-19, visit BC Gov News- Ministry of Health: https://news.gov.bc.ca/ministries/health
1. **What is novel coronavirus (COVID-19)?**
   - Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses found mostly in animals. In humans, they can cause diseases ranging from the common cold to more severe diseases such as Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) and Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS-CoV).
   - The symptoms reported to date are similar to other respiratory illnesses, including the flu and common cold. They include cough, sneezing, fever, sore throat and difficulty breathing.
   - While many of the characteristics of COVID-19 are still unknown, mild to severe illness has been reported for confirmed cases. The majority of people, approximately 82%, only experience mild symptoms according to the World Health Organization.

2. **What are the symptoms?**
   - Symptoms for COVID-19 include fever, cough and difficulty breathing.
   - If you develop these symptoms, avoid contact with others and use the BC COVID-19 symptom and self-assessment tool online at: [https://covid19.thrive.health/](https://covid19.thrive.health/) to determine if you need to be tested. If you need to call 811, please provide the information below:
     - your symptoms;
     - where you have been travelling or living;
     - if you had direct contact with animals (for example, if you visited a live animal market); and
     - if you had close contact with a sick person, especially if they had a fever, cough or difficulty breathing.
   - Call ahead to the health-care facility you are planning to visit so they can be prepared to take precautions. In an emergency, describe your symptoms, travel history and any sick contacts when you first arrive at the facility so that appropriate precautions can be taken.
   - Until more is understood about the virus, older people and people with a weakened immune system or underlying medical condition are considered at higher risk of severe disease.

3. **Should I get tested for COVID-19?**
   - You do not need to be tested if you have no symptoms or only have mild symptoms that can be managed at home, including returning travellers.
   - You can use the BC COVID-19 symptom and self-assessment tool online at: [https://covid19.thrive.health/](https://covid19.thrive.health/) to determine if you need to be tested.
   - The self-assessment app can also be downloaded at:
     - Web app link: [https://bc.thrive.health/covid19app](https://bc.thrive.health/covid19app)
Testing is done by the BC Centre for Disease Control’s labs and approved sites in each health authority region. Testing is available for all patients who need it, but not everyone requires a test. B.C. is currently testing those with respiratory symptoms who are:

1. Hospitalized, or likely to be hospitalized
2. Health-care workers
3. Residents of long-term care facilities
4. Part of an investigation of a cluster or outbreak.

When should I isolate?

People arriving in Canada from international travel are asked to stay home, self-isolate for 14 days, monitor themselves and their children closely for symptoms of illness. If any symptoms arise, limit your contact with other people and use the BC COVID-19 symptom and self-assessment tool online at: https://covid19.thrive.health/ to determine if you need to be tested.

If you have common cold or influenza like illness or symptoms compatible with COVID-19, you must self-isolate at home for a minimum of 10 days from symptom onset and until your symptoms have completely resolved.

For more information on how to self-isolate, visit: http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19/testing-isolation

What is the risk of getting sick from COVID-19 in B.C.?

Everybody needs to be aware that the risk of exposure is not just in one place. It’s in your community, too. You need to be taking measures now and everywhere in B.C.

The risk is higher for older age groups and those of all ages with underlying medical conditions as they are at an increased risk of more severe illness and outcomes.

The risk will vary between and within localized communities. For example, people living in assisting living or long-term care facilities are at higher risk of infection.

The risk will vary based on international travel history and type of activities while abroad. Cruise ship travellers or those who participate in mass gathering events have higher risks of exposure.

You can lower your risk with health precautions like washing your hands with soap and warm water for 20-30 seconds, staying at home when ill, cough or sneeze into your elbow sleeve, throw away used tissues and avoid touching your face. Maintaining social distance like refraining from handshakes, hugs, kisses will also reduce your risk of getting sick.

How can I protect myself and my family?
• In addition to physical distancing, the most important thing you can do to prevent infection is to:
  o Wash your hands frequently with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds
  o If a sink is not available, alcohol-based hand rubs can be used to clean your hands as long as they are not visibly soiled. If they are visibly soiled, use a wipe and then the alcohol-based hand rubs to effectively clean them
  o Do not touch your face, eyes, nose or mouth with unwashed hands
  o Cover your mouth and nose with a disposable tissue or the crease of your elbow when you sneeze or cough
  o Regularly clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces
  o Do not share foods, drinks, utensils, etc.

7. How is it spread?
• Coronavirus is transmitted via larger liquid droplets when a person coughs or sneezes. The virus can enter through these droplets through the eyes, nose or throat if you are in close contact. The virus is not known to be airborne (e.g. transmitted through the particles floating in the air) and it is not something that comes in through the skin.
• It can be spread by touch if a person has used their hands to cover their mouth or nose when they cough. That’s why we recommend you cough or sneeze into your arm and wash your hands regularly.

8. What is the difference between droplet contact and airborne transmission?
• Droplet contact: Some diseases can be transferred by large infected droplets contacting surfaces of the eye, nose, or mouth. For example, large droplets that may be visible to the naked eye are generated when a person sneezes or coughs. These droplets typically spread only one to two metres and are too large to float in the air (i.e. airborne) and quickly fall to the ground. Influenza and SARS are two examples of diseases capable of being transmitted from droplet contact. Currently, health experts believe that coronavirus can also be transmitted in this way.
• Airborne transmission: This occurs when much smaller evaporated droplets or dust particles containing the microorganism float in the air for long periods of time. Transmission occurs when others breathe the microorganism into their throat or lungs. Examples of diseases capable of airborne transmission include measles, chickenpox and tuberculosis. Currently, health experts believe that coronavirus cannot be transmitted through airborne transmission.

9. Will wearing a mask protect me?
• Masks should be used by sick people to prevent transmission to other people. A mask will help keep a person’s droplets in.
• It may be less effective to wear a mask in the community when a person is not sick themselves. Masks may give a person a false sense of security and are likely to increase the number of times a person will touch their own face (e.g., to adjust the mask).
• Health-care workers will wear surgical masks, eye protection and gowns in order to protect themselves and other patients. During health-care procedures in which aerosol sprays may be generated (for example, when giving certain inhaled medications), health-care workers should wear specialized masks.

10. Can you get sick from people who are asymptomatic (early stage of being sick before they show symptoms of infection)?
• There is still a lot that medical and public health experts don’t know about COVID-19 and there are studies underway to better understand it.

• There have been a few instances of transmissions before the person became sick or the symptoms were mild that the person did not know they were sick. Those are exceptions as most people became ill from being in close contact with someone who showed symptoms such as coughing and sneezing, therefore transmitting the virus through droplets. This is why B.C. health officials are focused on putting protection around people are ill and showing symptoms, in order to decrease the spread to others.

11. Are all travels restricted now? Do I need to self-isolate when I arrive in B.C.?
• Effective March 16, the federal government has announced:
  o International visitors are not allowed to enter Canada, except Americans, diplomats and flight crews and immediate family members of Canadian citizens or permanent residents.
  o Only essential traffic between Canada and U.S. is allowed: Canadians and Americans who need to cross the border to do essential work or for other urgent reasons are allowed to travel, this includes trucking, which allows food, fuel and medicine to move between Canada and the U.S.
  o All international inbound flights are consolidated to four hubs only, including the Vancouver International Airport.
  o Passengers who have symptoms of COVID-19 will not be allowed to board a plane to Canada.

• In addition, as of March 21, the federal government has announced a temporary 30-day restriction on all non-essential travel at the Canada-US border has been implemented.

• All those returning to B.C. must self-isolate for 14 days, meaning do not go to work, stay at home and limit contact with others. For more information on how to self-isolate, visit: http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19/testing-isolation

• When you are in self-isolation monitor yourself and your family daily for symptoms like fever or cough for 14 days.

• Avoid situations where you could infect other people such as social gatherings, work, public transportation and public spaces. It is okay for friends, family or others to drop off items you may need but limit your contact with people as much as possible.

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Monitor yourself and your children closely for symptoms similar to the flu or common cold such as coughing, sneezing, sore throat, fever or difficulty breathing. If any symptoms arise, use the BC COVID-19 symptom and self-assessment tool online at: https://covid19.thrive.health/ to determine if you need to be tested.

12. How is B.C. preparing for a spread of COVID-19?

- The Ministry of Health, the provincial health officer and BCCDC, working with many partners, have plans and are prepared to respond to new illnesses of public health concern.

- They have been actively monitoring the situation with COVID-19 over the past weeks, together with national and international groups, to be ready for identifying and caring for those who may have COVID-19 and to prevent its spread. B.C. developed one of the first tests to confirm COVID-19.

- The B.C. government and the provincial health officer have developed and activated the British Columbia Pandemic Provincial Coordination Plan to respond to the evolving outbreak. For more information about B.C.’s plan, visit: https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2020PREM0012-000404

- The B.C. government has developed a COVID-19 Action plan to provide relief to people and businesses in the province. For more information about the action plan, visit: https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2020PREM0013-000545

- A Provincial Coordination Committee is in place to respond to COVID-19 in British Columbia. This committee is co-ordinating provincial preparedness and response across our health sector.

13. What provincial supports are available?

**Housing**

- On March 21, the Province announced:
  - A ban on evictions for non-payment of rent in BC Housing-funded buildings,
  - The development of protocols and identification of sites to support isolation for vulnerable people experiencing homelessness – sheltered or unsheltered – and those in private single room occupancy (SROs) and social housing buildings,
  - Sustaining service providers through continued payments to ensure they can pay their staff and operating costs, and
  - Centralized procurement for critical supplies needed by frontline providers, including gloves and cleaning products.

- Establishing a provincial Vulnerable Population Working Group to identify, assess and address the immediate challenges faced, in particular by people living on the street, people experiencing homelessness.
living in encampments, shelter residents, tenants of private SROs and tenants in social and supportive housing buildings.

- BC Housing is obtaining personal protective equipment, such as gloves and cleaning products, needed by frontline workers on a central basis and is distributing them directly to housing providers.

- Many residents may face challenges in making rent payments as a result of COVID-19, BC Housing has implemented a moratorium on eviction for non-payment of rent in their directly managed properties and is also working with non-profit housing providers around the province to do the same.

- In addition, the process of applying for a rent reduction is being streamlined for tenants who have lost income as a result of COVID-19, including changing the rules to remove the requirement for proof that the decrease in income is permanent.

- Enhanced screening and cleaning protocols are in place at residential facilities to reduce the potential that this virus can spread within the building and beyond.

- To support partners’ efforts, BC Housing is also working closely with the Ministry of Health, the provincial health officer, local health authorities, the BC Non-Profit Housing Association and the Aboriginal Housing Management Association to ensure non-profit providers can protect their guests and residents.

- This includes providing training and support in encouraging physical distancing, best practices in building cleaning and maintenance, identification of on- and off-site isolation spaces, and access to testing and other services.

**COVID-19 action plan**

- As of March 23, the B.C. government is introducing a $5 billion in income supports, tax relief and direct funding for people, businesses and services.

- The COVID-19 Action Plan is government’s first step to provide relief to people and businesses in B.C. The plan dedicates $2.8 billion to help people and fund the services they need to weather the crisis; $2.2 billion will provide relief to businesses and help them recover after the outbreak.

- The plan includes immediate measures, effective as of March 23, to help individuals and families cope with potential illness, financial strain or precarious employment.

- It also adds funding to key services such as health care, housing, and social services to make sure they continue to support British Columbians and help contain the spread of COVID-19.

**B.C. Emergency Benefit for Workers**
• Of the $2.8 billion allocated to ensure people have the services and support they need during this difficult time, the B.C. government is dedicating $1.1 billion to boost the income of people affected by COVID-19.

• A new B.C. Emergency Benefit for Workers will provide a tax-free $1,000-dollar payment to British Columbians whose ability to work has been affected by the outbreak.

• Together, the B.C. Emergency Benefit for Workers and the enhanced B.C. Climate Action Tax Credit will complement federal income supports and help people who are struggling with job loss, reduced income or increased costs through the immediate crisis.

• The Province is focused on keeping people safe, healthy and supported throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. To support that work, the action plan provides $1.7 billion for the critical services British Columbians need.

Students, non-profit, service delivery agencies and child care providers

• To support non-profits, service delivery agencies, and child care providers, the Province will continue to provide funding even if these agencies are closed or their regular operations have been disrupted.

• Child care centres that choose to stay open to provide care to the children of essential workers will be eligible to have their funding increased to 75% of their costs.

• To help people with B.C. student loans, the Province is freezing B.C. student loan payments for six months starting March 30, 2020. Federal student loans are being frozen as well.

• The COVID-19 Action Plan takes further steps to boost income supports by increasing and expanding the B.C Climate Action Tax Credit this July.

Tax relief

• Effective as of March 23, businesses with a payroll over $500,000 can defer their employer health tax payments until Sept. 30, 2020. Businesses with a payroll under this threshold are already exempt from the tax.

• In addition to the employer health tax, the Province is extending tax filing and payment deadlines for the PST, MRDT, tobacco tax, motor fuel tax and carbon tax until Sept. 30, 2020.

• The scheduled April 1 increase to the provincial carbon tax, as well as the new PST registration requirements on e-commerce and the implementation of PST on sweetened carbonated drinks, will be delayed and their timing will be reviewed by Sept. 30, 2020.
• Business, and light and major industry property classes will see their school tax cut in half. This will provide $500 million in immediate relief for business that own their property and allow commercial landlords to immediately pass savings on to their tenants in triple-net leases.

**Long-term economic recovery**

• In the longer-term, the recovery plan will dedicate funding to particularly hard-hit parts of our economy, such as the tourism, hospitality and culture sectors.

• The B.C. government is partnering with business and labour leaders to build an economic stimulus plan. The Province has allocated $1.5 billion for economic recovery.

14. **How is the B.C. government supporting seniors living independently?**

• The Province recognizes the incredible groundswell of support in communities across B.C. for our families, friends, and neighbours who are affected by COVID-19.

• Among those whose daily life has been impacted are seniors living independently in the community.

• As more and more people are appropriately self isolating, many seniors who are able to live independently with the support of family and friends are finding those supports unavailable.

• These supports may be as simple as friendly visits and check-ins by phone, or as critical as grocery shopping or prescription drop-offs for essential medications.

• Government is responding to this urgent need with a significant investment in community-based senior’s care.

• We are investing $50 million in the United Way to support the development of a comprehensive new program to support seniors in community.

• The funding will expand current services, and address both geographic and capacity gaps where they exist.

• As part of this investment, we have established a COVID-19 Seniors Working Group to find ways to better support seniors.

• The working group has developed an emergency response plan in partnership with United Way and is providing:
  
  o Easy access to services through bc211, which is now available provincewide

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A volunteer program to virtually connect volunteers with seniors at home to provide services such as virtual friendly visits, grocery shopping deliveries, prescription drop-offs and transportation for essential medical appointments

15. Can people still visit friends or families in care facilities?

- To protect the elderly and the most vulnerable populations to COVID-19, effective March 16, visitations to long-term care facilities are restricted to essential visits only.

- Essential visits include compassionate visits for end-of-life care and visits that support care plans for residents based on resident and family needs, for example, families who routinely visit to provide assistance with feeding or mobility.

- It is important that we take these steps to ensure seniors remain protected from COVID-19.

- We need to weigh the benefits of each visit with the risks in each instance.

- Most people who become infected with COVID-19 will experience a mild illness that will not require medical care, but those who are vulnerable to the disease – those who are elderly or who have underlying conditions that compromise the immune system – are at risk for severe illness.

- Seniors residing in long term care facilities are at a higher risk of serious illness from COVID-19, which requires enhanced protection measures aimed at limiting the spread of the virus in Long Term Care homes.

- Additionally, COVID-19 may lead to increased pressure in the acute care system, resulting in the need to transfer appropriate alternate level of care patients to long term care facilities.

- Again, our goal is to keep seniors safe across the province and before each shift long term care home workers are being screened.

- We know that this will be a challenge for some people in our community because you will not be able to see your loved one as simply and as easily as we have in the past. Long term care homes are going out of their way to try and put in provisions to allow you to connect, even if you’re not physically present.

16. Should I buy extra food, medication and supplies to prepare for COVID-19?

- It is important for everyone to make sure they have what they need to remain healthy.

- However, it doesn’t mean you need to go out and stockpile things; take a look at what you have already at home before you purchase more.

- Cleaning your hands regularly is important, so carry a alcohol-based hand sanitizer, for when you are outside of our home and having access to soap and water are important as well.
• In terms of medications, the Ministry of Health and the provincial health officer have worked with the College of Pharmacists to advise pharmacies to provide patients with a prescription refill or an emergency supply of their medications if needed. This will give physicians more time to care for patients with acute care needs.

• British Columbians are asked to respect this temporary arrangement and are reminded that there is no need to stockpile medication.

• In short, please be thoughtful and reflect on the consequences of buying excessively. If you buy much more than you need, it means the next person in line who really has a shortage at home will not be able to get what they need.

17. Are all public events and gatherings cancelled?
• The provincial health officer encourages everyone to practice physical distancing to limit transmission of COVID-19. These efforts are not forever but are important now.

• You can still shop for groceries and do activities where you can maintain social and physical distance with other people.

• Effective March 16, the Ministry of Health and the provincial health officer have issued an order prohibiting gatherings of more than 50 people. This includes indoor and outdoor sporting events, conferences, meetings, religious gatherings, weddings or other similar events. This threshold has been selected, as it is much easier to maintain important physical distancing to prevent transmission of COVID-19.

18. Should weddings and life rituals be cancelled as well?
• Weddings, but also end of life rituals, are very important for families, but, many of them also involve people coming together, hugging, kissing, sharing food, which is something that must be avoided at this time.

• Those gatherings are prime situations for the virus to spread to others, and the best thing to keep loved ones safe – and especially the elderly people in our lives safe - is to cancel these events as they are simply too risky.

• This is why the provincial health officer has issued a class order prohibiting the gathering of people to no more than 50 people as long as they can maintain physical distancing.

• Family gatherings, like weddings, that have less than 50 people are still considered too high risk right now and must be cancelled or postponed.

• It is important that British Columbians respect the provincial health officer’s orders.

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• These orders protect B.C.’s most vulnerable, health-care system and health-care workers – who are undertaking a tremendously difficult task right now. They are temporary measures that will have a positive long-term impact. All British Columbians must abide by them, and the provincial health officer may enlist peace officers to enforce them if needed.

19. Are businesses closed?
• As of March 16, the attorney general, minister responsible for the British Columbia Lottery Corporation, has ordered all casinos to close until further notice to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission.

• As of March 17, businesses with liquor primary licences, such as bars, pubs and night clubs, must close as they are unable to adequately meet the requirements of physical distancing. All restaurants and cafes have to move to take-out and delivery models.

• As of March 21, personal service establishments such as nail salons, tattoo parlours, barbershops, beauty parlours, health spas and massage parlours to close until further notice. These services require direct, personal contact with other people, and that is impossible to deliver while maintaining physical distancing.

20. Will schools, daycare centres and workplaces close temporarily?
• On March 17, the Minister of Education announced that all classes from Kindergarten to grade 12 are suspended indefinitely. No set date when in class room instruction will continue. Teachers will have a plan to continue instruction, not in the classroom, after March 30.

• Every student set to graduate in grade 12 will graduate. All efforts will be made to ensure those who need literacy requirement will get them. Graduation assessment for grade 10 and 11 will be postponed. There will be an ongoing effort to ensure classes get underway smoothly at some point in the future.

• Licensed childcare centres remain open at this time. The health of children, staff and parents are very paramount, that is why on March 23, the Minister of Finance made the following announcement:
  o The B.C. government will continue to provide funding to child care centres, even if they are closed or their regular operations have been disrupted.
  o Child care centres that choose to stay open to provide care to the children of essential workers will be eligible to have their funding increased to 75% of their costs.

• Some post-secondary institutions have classes with more than 50 students and public health officials are working with them to take measures to address this situation.

• On March 23, the Minister of Finance announced that to help people with B.C. student loans, the Province is freezing B.C. student loan payments for six months starting March 30, 2020. Federal student loans are being frozen as well.
• As of March 12, the Ministry of Health and the provincial health officer have asked employers to excuse staff for sick leave without requiring a doctor’s note, if their employees are ill or required to self-isolate. They are also reinforcing that if you have symptoms and may have been exposed to COVID-19, you should use the BC COVID-19 symptom and self-assessment tool online at: https://covid19.thrive.health/ to determine if you need to be tested. You do not need to be tested if you do not have symptoms or you only have mild symptoms that can be managed at home.

• There have been reports of employers requiring all their staff to get tested. Only a health-care professional can determine whether you require a test – and employers should not require employees to have a test if a health-care provider has recommended against it.

• Sufficient physical distancing of one to two meters should be incorporated for workers and customers for businesses and services that will remain open to provide transportation, keep our communities safe and provide essential goods and services.

• The province recognizes this will have a significant economic and social impact and want to reassure British Columbians that these are temporary measures required to protect the health of the public at this critical time of pandemic. The Ministry of Health and the provincial health officer will be reassessing these conditions on an ongoing basis as the pandemic evolves.

• On March 23, the Province announced a recovery plan that will dedicate funding to particularly hard-hit parts of our economy, such as the tourism, hospitality and culture sectors.

• The B.C. government is partnering with business and labour leaders to build an economic stimulus plan. The Province has allocated $1.5 billion for economic recovery.

21. Are hospitals’ and healthcare facilities’ services impacted by COVID-19?

• The provincial government is taking a number of additional steps to address the changing situation in B.C. and ensure our health-care system is best positioned to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic.

• On March 16, British Columbia’s health authorities are directed to immediately move all hospitals in the province to Outbreak Response Phase 2. This means hospitals will undertake only urgent and emergency procedures and will postpone all non-urgent scheduled surgeries.

• Lions Gate Hospital in the Vancouver Coastal Health region is directed to move to Outbreak Response Phase 3. This means the hospital will accept only emergency patients. Lions Gate Hospital is also preparing to open a dedicated COVID-19 unit to provide care to those with the virus.
• These measures will assist hospitals to redeploy and train essential service health-care providers on critical care related to COVID-19 to ensure sufficient medical supplies for patients and staff who need them most, and to further increase capacity to respond to the potential for a surge of COVID-19 patients requiring acute care.

22. Information on how we can play a part in keeping our communities safe and healthy

• Wash your hands frequently with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds.

• If a sink is not available, alcohol-based hand rubs can be used to clean your hands as long as they are not visibly soiled. If they are visibly soiled, use a wipe and then the alcohol-based hand rubs to effectively clean them.

• Do not touch your face, eyes, nose or mouth with unwashed hands.

• Cover your mouth and nose with a disposable tissue or the crease of your elbow when you sneeze or cough.

• Regularly clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces.

• Do not share foods, drinks, utensils, etc.

• Keep about 2 meters of distance between yourselves and others.

• Stay home if you feel sick.

• Keep in touch with friends and families with technology: call, text, email or meet virtually to support each other.

• You can also join a provincewide volunteer program to virtually connect with seniors living in your communities and provide services such as virtual friendly visits, grocery shopping deliveries, prescription drop-offs and transportation for essential medical appointments.

23. Advice for students and families – travel & field trips

• As of March 21, a temporary 30-day restriction on all non-essential travel at the Canada-US border has been implemented.

• On March 17, the federal government announced that Canada will be closing its borders to foreign travellers, with exceptions of air crews, diplomats, immediate members of citizens and US citizens. Travellers showing symptoms of the virus will be banned from getting on the plane.
• Effective March 13, if you have travelled outside of Canada in the previous 14 days, federal and provincial authorities ask that you self-isolate for 14 days, meaning do not go to school or work, stay at home and limit contact with others.

• When you are in self-isolation monitor yourself and your family daily for symptoms like fever or cough for 14 days.

• If any symptoms arise, limit your contact with other people and use the BC COVID-19 symptoms and self-assessment tool online at: [https://covid19.thrive.health/](https://covid19.thrive.health/) to determine if you need to be tested.

### 24. Information for travellers

- International visitors are not allowed to enter Canada, except diplomats and flight crews and immediate family members of Canadian citizens or permanent residents.

- As of March 21, the federal government has also announced a temporary 30-day restriction on all non-essential travel at the Canada-US border has been implemented.

- Only essential traffic between Canada and U.S. is allowed: Canadians and Americans who need to cross the border to do essential work or for other urgent reasons are allowed to travel, this includes trucking, which allows food, fuel and medicine to move between Canada and the U.S.

- If you are a Canadian citizen who had travelled to another country during the outbreak and are currently outside of Canada, come home now while there are still commercial flights available.

- People arriving in Canada from international travel are asked to stay home, self-isolate for 14 days, monitor themselves and their children closely for symptoms of illness. If any symptoms arise, limit your contact with other people and use the BC COVID-19 symptom and self-assessment tool online at: [https://covid19.thrive.health/](https://covid19.thrive.health/) to determine if you need to be tested.

- Canada also has active COVID-19 travel advisories for other countries and regions, go to Government of Canada for latest travel alerts at: [https://travel.gc.ca/travelling/health-safety/travel-health-notices](https://travel.gc.ca/travelling/health-safety/travel-health-notices)

### 25. What if my job requires me to travel between Canada and the U.S.?

- The federal Transport Minister Marc Garneau said certain kinds of workers who need to cross the Canada-U.S. border will be exempted from requirements to self-isolate.

- These include: airline, train and marine crews, truck drivers and other people whose professions require cross-border travel, these essential travels allow food, fuel and medicine to move between Canada and the U.S.
26. What’s being done to educate and monitor people who are returning from travelling in countries impacted by COVID-19?

- A lot is being done to inform and screen travellers at the airport. The federal government has set up a system at international airports to: provide information to travellers and identify anyone returning to Canada who may be ill.

- If they are unwell, they are asked to see a doctor to get tested. If they feel fine, they are given info on symptoms to look for and what to do in case they become sick later. They’re also asked to stay home for 14 days so if they become sick they don’t spread the disease to other people. For more information, visit Health Canada’s website at: https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/canadas-response.html#a

27. Can you get sick from touching a package from any area where COVID-19 has been reported?

- To our knowledge, no one has become ill from touching a package from a country where COVID-19 has been reported so far and the risk is low.

- COVID-19 is transmitted through respiratory droplets that come from a person’s throat or lungs when they’re coughing or sneezing. While droplets can fall on surfaces including packages, viruses in the coronavirus family don’t survive very long on surfaces. They are sensitive to the environment and likely won’t survive for the amount of time it takes for packages to travel internationally.

- We recommend washing your hands frequently with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds as a precaution to further lower your risk of getting sick from COVID-19 and other viruses. Whenever you have touched surfaces, packages or other people, wash your hands before you touch your face, take care of other people or prepare food.

Additional information from Health Canada

28. What actions are being taken at Canadian airports to prevent COVID-19?

- As of March 21, the federal government has also announced a temporary 30-day restriction on all non-essential travel at the Canada-US border has been implemented.

- As of March 18, 2020, the Government of Canada has:
  
  - Ban foreign nationals from all countries except the United States from entering Canada. This measure does not apply to air crews, travellers arriving in Canada in transit to a third country, Canadian permanent residents, diplomats or immediate family members of Canadian citizens.
  - Redirect international passenger flight arrivals to 4 airports:
    1. Calgary International Airport
    2. Vancouver International Airport

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3. Toronto-Pearson International Airport
4. Montréal-Pierre Elliott Trudeau International Airport

- Once the temporary ban on non-essential travel at the Canada-US border is over, domestic flights or flights from the U.S., sun destinations (such as Mexico and the Caribbean), or St. Pierre-et-Miquelon, can continue to operate on their regular routes and land at current Canadian destinations. The Government is working closely with the airline industry and airports to avoid unnecessarily disrupting operations and to minimize the inconvenience to travellers.

- Canada will also implement measures at airports to:
  - Strengthen health screening
  - Increase presence to conduct further health screening and public outreach
  - Increase signage throughout the arrivals area to encourage travellers to follow the latest public health guidance
  - Prevent all travellers who have COVID-19 symptoms, regardless of their citizenship, from boarding international flights to Canada
  - Airlines will conduct a basic health assessment of all air travellers based on guidance from the Public Health Agency of Canada

29. Are incoming travellers being screened for COVID-19?


30. What will happen if travellers show symptoms?

- All travellers who have COVID-19 symptoms, regardless of their citizenship, will not be able to board international flights to Canada.

- In general, when a traveller shows signs of an infectious disease upon arrival in Canada, border services officers, or airport and airline staff contact a PHAC quarantine officer.

- The quarantine officer then performs a more detailed assessment. If necessary, the quarantine officer will address the potential public health risk, such as:
  - ordering the traveller to be transported to hospital to undergo a medical examination
  - reporting to the local public health authority

31. Are cruise ships still coming to Canada?

- Canada’s Chief Public Health Officer has issued a formal health advisory, recommending that Canadians avoid going on cruise ships at this time. The health risk is for all the people touched by the cruise ship industry in Canada.
• As a response to COVID-19, on March 13, the Government of Canada has deferred the start of the cruise ship season in Canada, from April 2, 2020, to July 1, 2020, at the earliest. This deferral applies to cruise ships capable of carrying more than 500 passengers and crew members.

• Given the limited public health capacity in Canada’s Northern communities, the cruise ship season for vessels with Canadian Arctic stops will be deferred for the entire season this year. This would apply to cruise ships of all sizes.

• While this measure does not apply to ferries or smaller vessels at this time, the Government of Canada is also developing an approach to ensure health measures are strengthened in all passenger vessels across Canada. Please see Canada’s news release for more information: https://www.canada.ca/en/transport-canada/news/2020/03/government-of-canada-announces-intention-to-defer-the-start-of-cruise-ship-season-in-canada-as-covid-19-response-measure.html

• For more information on the federal government’s actions on Canadian borders, please visit their website at: https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/canadas-response.html#acb

Additional information from the World Health Organization (WHO)

For more commonly asked questions and answers on COVID-19 in Chinese, visit the WHO website. More information in Punjabi is also available on the WHO website.