



## Preparing for Coronavirus in Manitoba

Manitoba public health officials are providing guidance to health care providers about what should be done if they suspect they have come in contact with COVID-19. In addition, they are working with the World Health Organization and the Public Health Agency of Canada and other provinces and territories to monitor, gather information, assess the risk and respond to the evolving situation. Recommendations to health care providers are based on current evidence and are being continuously reviewed and reassessed. Interlake-Eastern RHA has been constantly communicating evolving care guidelines as more information comes to light about this global outbreak.

At this time, the risk associated with COVID-19 in Canada is low. For Canadians traveling abroad, the risk associated with COVID-19 is also low however, it will vary depending on destination and travel itinerary. For current and country specific travel advice please see the [Government of Canada's Travel Advice and Advisories website](https://travel.gc.ca/travelling/advisories):  
<https://travel.gc.ca/travelling/advisories>.

## Incident Management System Enacted in Interlake-Eastern RHA

In February, Interlake-Eastern RHA enacted incident management system protocols to manage regional response to coronavirus. Regional representatives are participating provincial conference calls. To-date, regionally, the incident management team has been meeting via conference call weekly. The regional team includes representation from all program areas and First Nations communities in the region that play a role in coordinating response.

The region's public health program and its infection, prevention and control team have been actively advising and educating staff on the precautions they need to be taking. They are leading mandatory attendance simulated scenarios of patients with COVID-19 illness attending our health care facilities so staff are prepared. In addition, a communication network has been established to ensure all facilities in the region are posting current information for the public and for staff.

Signage posted at IERHA hospitals, clinics and community health offices, is requesting members of the public to advise staff upon entry to our facilities if they meet any of the screening criteria for contact with COVID-19 and, if they are symptomatic, to clean their hands or use hand sanitizer and to put on a mask.

## Ensuring Access to Required Supplies

Interlake-Eastern RHA has not experienced any shortage in supplies.

Ensuring that staff have access to the equipment and supplies required for safe patient care and the personal protection of staff is a priority. Managing access to supplies provincially is a topic discussed regularly on provincial COVID-19 conference calls so that we and other RHAs in the province can identify our needs and ensure we will have the supplies we need in the event that more are required.

## Directions for people who believe they may have come in contact with COVID-19

If people are inquiring of towns, municipalities, First Nation communities and public schools what actions they should take to stay healthy, we request that they be directed to review [these helpful responses to commonly asked questions](#) on the Province of Manitoba's website.

People who are ill and have recently travelled to an [affected area](#), or if they have been in close contact (within 2 metres/6 feet) with an ill person connected to the current outbreak, are advised to call Health Links Info Santé at 1-888-315-9257.

Health Links Info Santé's registered nurses are available 24-hours a day. People should follow Health Links Info Santé's recommendations that may include visiting the nearest emergency department or other established site for assessment. Health Links Info Santé will advise health care facilities in advance if they are referring someone for assessment. People may also be advised to self-isolate (avoid situations where infection of other people could occur) or self-monitor (record temperature twice daily to monitor symptom development).

In the event of a health emergency, always call 911 and advise of your travel or contact history if relevant.

## Please help to maintain calm by sharing the facts.

The term outbreak is unsettling for people to hear and of course thoughts run to how we can protect ourselves and our families. Here is some factual information to share with your residents:

### **The risk associated with COVID-19 in Canada is currently low.**

Remember that the risk of acquiring COVID-19 in Canada is low at this time and the majority of those who contract the virus do not become seriously ill. We are continually reminded this is an emerging, rapidly evolving situation and Manitoba public health officials continue to monitor, gather information, assess risk and recommend evidence-based approaches for health-care providers and precautions for returning travelers.

### **How is the virus spread?**

The virus can be spread through close contact (within 2 meters/6 feet) with an infected person who is ill. You can also get COVID-19 by touching objects contaminated with the virus and then touching your mouth, eyes or nose.

### **Should I use a mask?**

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for health-care providers includes gloves, gown, procedure or surgical mask and eye/face protection. For certain medical procedures that are known to increase risk of exposure, an N95 respirator is required.

If members of the public are healthy, it is not clear there is any significant benefit to wearing masks to prevent influenza-like illnesses, including COVID-19, in the community setting. If someone is sick and experiencing influenza-like-illness symptoms such as coughing or sneezing, wearing a mask can help prevent the spread of germs and viruses in the health care setting. This is why people who are experiencing cough or respiratory symptoms are provided with a mask to wear if they are entering our health-care facilities and they will be isolated from other people while being cared for.

### **Wash those hands!**

Good hand hygiene will provide significant protection from viral respiratory illnesses. Why? Because hand washing works! Wet your hands with clean running water and then lather them with soap; don't miss the backs of your hands, between your fingers or under your nails. Make sure to scrub for at least 20 seconds and dry them with a clean towel or let them air dry. Alcohol-based hand sanitizers, which should be rubbed in for about 20 seconds, can also work, but the gel must contain at least 60 percent alcohol.

### **Looking for more information?**

The Province of Manitoba maintains a [Coronavirus website](#) that is updated regularly and includes [links to the weekly bulletin](#) that advises of testing results.

See the helpful graphics below that we encourage you to share with your residents!

## COVID-19

### **PERSONAL PREPAREDNESS**

Source: Government of Manitoba Health

1. Wash your hands
2. Cover your cough.
3. Stay home when you are sick.
4. Get accurate information from reliable sources.

Visit [www.gov.mb.ca/health/coronavirus](http://www.gov.mb.ca/health/coronavirus)  
for accurate information on COVID-19

## COVID-19

### **SELF-ISOLATION**

Source: Government of Manitoba Health

**1.** Means not attending activities or gatherings where you may come in close contact with other people

**2.** This includes:

- work, school and university
- public transport
- health-care facilities
- faith-based facilities (church)