Questions and Answer about Novel Coronavirus

What is the Coronavirus?

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses that originate in animals but are known to cause respiratory illness in humans, particularly during the fall and winter months. Other novel coronaviruses have included Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) and Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS-CoV).

In January, 2020, a novel (new) coronavirus (2019-nCoV) was identified as the cause of an outbreak of pneumonia originating in Wuhan. The latest statistics for Ontario are available at: ontario.ca/coronavirus.

What is the risk?

Public Health Ontario advises that the risk to Ontarians is still considered low at this time. The situation is rapidly evolving and the University is taking its guidance from public health agencies at the local, provincial and federal level, who are closely monitoring the outbreak, conducting surveillance and appropriate laboratory testing, and providing public health and infection control guidance.

To date, cases have been reported in individuals who have been in Wuhan, China, and those who have had personal contact with infected individuals. The risk of more severe illness may be higher for individuals with weakened immune systems such as older people or chronic diseases such as diabetes, or heart, renal or chronic lung disease.

What are the symptoms of novel Coronavirus?

Symptoms range from common to severe respiratory illnesses and include:

- fever
- cough
- difficulty breathing

Many of these symptoms are similar to seasonal influenza.

Should you experience these symptoms AND

- Have travelled to Hubei Province (Wuhan) in the 14 days before the start of illness

OR

- Close contact with a person with an acute respiratory illness who has been to Hubei Province (Wuhan) within 14 days prior to the onset of their illness

OR

- Close contact with a case of novel coronavirus

Please avoid contact with others and contact Queen’s Student Wellness Services at (613) 533-2506, your local health care provider, or Telehealth Ontario (1-866-797-0000)

The Ministry of Health of Ontario is presently stating the risk of contracting novel coronavirus is low.
What can I do to protect myself?

As usual, continue to practice good hand washing techniques and hygiene practices. This includes washing thoroughly with soap and water, using hand sanitizer, coughing or sneezing into your elbow, and staying at home or in your residence room if you are experiencing flu-like symptoms. Information and resources are available through Student Wellness Services and KFLA Public Health

Should students, staff or faculty with flu-like symptoms attend class/work?

As with any illness, those with severe symptoms should stay at home or in their residence room. Students in residence can contact their Don to assist with delivery of food from the dining room. For staff, please report your absence promptly to your manager per normal practice.

I live in residence and I have flu-like symptoms. What should I do?

As with any illness, those with severe symptoms should stay at home or in their residence room. Students in residence can contact their Don to assist with delivery of food from the dining room.

If you are experiencing fever, cough or, difficulty breathing AND

Have travelled to Hubei Province (Wuhan) in the 14 days before the start of illness

OR

Had close contact with a person with an acute respiratory illness who has been to Hubei Province (Wuhan) within 14 days prior to the onset of their illness

OR

Had close contact with a case of novel coronavirus

Please avoid contact with others and contact Queen’s Student Wellness Services at (613) 533-2506, your local health care provider, or Telehealth Ontario (1-866-797-0000)

As it is also influenza season, you may want to purchase the following items to keep on hand as a precautionary measure:

- Over-the-counter medication to reduce aches and fever (e.g., acetaminophen or ibuprofen)
- Cough medicine and throat lozenges
- Any prescription medicines you take
- A thermometer (non-mercury)
- Tissues
- Hand sanitizer (should contain at least 60% alcohol)
- Disinfecting wipes or cleaning products to clean your shared and personal space
- A water canteen or bottled water, and juice

The Ministry of Health of Ontario is presently stating the risk of contracting novel coronavirus is low. Additional information and resources are available through Student Wellness Services and KFLA Public Health.
**Should students, staff or faculty with flu-like symptoms be excluded from class/work?**

No one should be excluded or banned from attending classes or work. We encourage students, staff and faculty with flu-like symptoms to remain at home or in residence. If you choose to attend class/work, please take appropriate precautions to help prevent the spread of germs. The Ministry of Health of Ontario is presently stating the risk of contracting Novel coronavirus is low.

**Should anyone with a travel history to an affected region be excluded from class/work?**

Individuals who have travelled to a novel coronavirus affected region recently who do not have any symptoms are not recommended to isolate themselves at this time.

If you are experiencing:

- Fever, cough or, difficulty breathing

AND

- Have travelled to Hubei Province (Wuhan) in the 14 days before the start of illness

OR

- Close contact with a person with an acute respiratory illness who has been to Hubei Province (Wuhan) within 14 days prior to the onset of their illness

OR

- Close contact with a case of novel coronavirus

**Please avoid contact with others and contact Queen’s Student Wellness Services at (613) 533-2506, your local health care provider, or Telehealth Ontario (1-866-797-0000)**

The Ministry of Health of Ontario is presently stating the risk of contracting novel coronavirus is low.

**Will classes be cancelled?**

Due to uncertainties related to the start of the semester at Chinese universities and the increasing risk associated with travel to the country, all exchanges, independent study abroad and practicums to China this term have been cancelled this term.

There are no plans to alter academic activities on campus. There is currently no significant risk of community transmission of the novel coronavirus in Canada. Should the situation change, we will provide advice on this website.

**Should we be canceling events?**

At this time, there is no need to alter or cancel events. There is currently no significant risk of community transmission of the novel coronavirus in Canada. Should the situation change, we will provide advice on this website.
Should I wear a mask?

Generally, a mask is not required at this time. Surgical masks, such as those sold in pharmacies, have limited value. Those in health care settings will follow the requirements of their facilities with respect to appropriate protective gear if they are working with suspected or confirmed cases.

I am in a health care setting off-campus. Are there additional precautions I should take?

Learners, faculty and staff in a health science setting, should follow the directions of the administration of the facility.

I am planning to travel in the coming days. What should I do?

At this time, Global Affairs and the CDC have advised that all non-essential travel to China be suspended. The university has therefore determined that all exchanges, practicums and independent studies for China for the winter term are cancelled.

University-sponsored staff travel to China, including recruitment trips, should be cancelled until further notice.

The university has designated China as an unmanageable risk for travel. Faculty and graduate student travel for study or research that can be demonstrated as essential may still be approved on a case-by-case basis.

Anyone that does travel to China will be required to register their trip through the Off-Campus Activity Safety Policy (OCASP).

No students or faculty should feel compelled to travel to China or surrounding Asian Pacific countries out of academic concern as there appears to be increasing risk. This is especially true for graduate students that might travel for study/research even if that is not through an organized exchange.

Personal travel remains at your discretion; however, we strongly encourage you to pay attention to all travel advisories and advisories.

Travel to international destinations have not been affected and can continue subject the requirements of the OCASP.

There are a lot of rumours and conflicting stories circulating on social channels – How do I know who to believe?

Queen’s is aware that there have been several instances of false and even deliberately misleading information posted on various sites online. The University is in direct contact with experts and peer institutions and will only post verifiable information from official sources on our site. You should only trust official websites, and if you have any doubts, ask. We will do our best to address any instances of misinformation where and when we see it.
The World Health Organization has issued a statement declaring the Novel coronavirus outbreak a Public Health Emergency of International Concern. What does this mean?

The declaration does not change the actions taken by the university. The WHO declaration facilitates virus surveillance activities and better information sharing among countries in an effort to combat the further spread of the virus. There is still no evidence of community spread in Canada and risk levels remain low in Kingston, according to KFL&A Public Health.

I’m feeling overwhelmed, who can I talk to?

Personal health matters are serious and can be distressing. There are resources available should you need to talk to someone.

Students can make an appointment at Student Wellness Services, or call Good2Talk or EmpowerMe for support. There are also International Student Advisors at the Queen’s University International Center (QUIC), who are available to talk about how the outbreak is impacting you.

Queen’s employees and their families can contact their Employee and Family Assistance Program through Homewood Health, at 1.800.663.1142 or 1.866.398.9505 (Numéro sans frais - en français)

Important Resources:

Student Wellness Services
KFL&A Public Health
Public Health Ontario
Public Health Agency of Canada
World Health Organization

Telehealth Ontario: 1-866-797-0000

Telehealth Ontario is a free, confidential service you can call to get health advice or information. A Registered Nurse will take your call 24 hours a day, seven days a week.