

# Undiagnosed Viral Pneumonia in Central China

## Update to York Region health care providers as of January 8, 2020

As you may have seen in recent media reports, Chinese authorities issued a public statement on December 31, 2019 about cases of pneumonia with unknown cause associated with a local live seafood market in Wuhan, China (located in Hubei province). As of January 8, 2020, approximately 59 cases have been reported with 7 in serious condition.

Many of the cases were associated with the seafood market, prompting concerns that the viral pneumonia outbreak may have been transmitted from animals. The seafood market has since been closed. A full investigation is underway, including laboratory testing, to identify the cause of the illness. Symptoms of the illness include fever and new or worsening cough or shortness of breath.

There is no evidence of person-to-person spread at this time. SARS, avian and human influenza viruses, MERS-CoV, and adenovirus have been ruled out as possible causes. The World Health Organization and the Public Health Agency of Canada are monitoring the situation, and York Region Public Health will continue to inform you as new information develops.

The risk to York Region residents is low. To date, no suspected cases have occurred in Canada and there are no known cases involving Canadians overseas. Regardless, we ask that health care providers in York Region remain vigilant and follow the advice outlined below.

**Contact York Region Public Health immediately if you suspect a diagnosis of acute respiratory infection with recent travel (roughly  $\leq 14$  days prior to onset) to Wuhan, China**

Call **1-877-464-9675 ext. 73588** (Monday to Friday: 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.) or **905-953-6478** after hours (before 8:30 a.m. and after 4:30 p.m. Monday to Friday and 24 hours per day on weekends/holidays).

### For health care providers working in hospitals:

- Report any suspicious cases right away to York Region Public Health (as above)
- Ontario's Ministry of Health has asked that emergency departments consider including travel to Wuhan, China as part of routine travel screening when triaging patients
- Implement contact/droplet precautions immediately when patients present with acute respiratory symptoms and a history of recent travel to Wuhan, China and if possible, provide a single room. Use of a negative pressure room and N95 masks are warranted in case aerosol-generating procedures are performed

### For community health care providers:

- Report any suspicious cases right away to York Region Public Health (as above)
- Remember to ask about recent travel to Wuhan, China when people present with acute respiratory symptoms
- Use contact/droplet precautions when people present with acute respiratory symptoms (as is usually advised)

## General Prevention Information

Providers can do the following to ensure primary prevention (for this specific illness and other acute respiratory diseases, in general, given the time of year):

- Encourage uptake of flu vaccine among your patient population
- Adhere to best practices with regards to infection prevention and control practices (screen people at triage, implement adequate precautions based on signs and symptoms)
- Practice good hand hygiene
- Encourage your own staff to get the influenza vaccine
- Remind patients of the following prevention messages including:
  - Ensuring adequate hand hygiene and cough/sneeze etiquette
  - Staying home when ill
- For those traveling to China, the Public Health Agency of Canada recommends: avoiding high risk areas like farms, live animal markets and areas where animals may be slaughtered; avoiding contact with animals and surfaces with animal droppings or secretions

## Helpful Resources

ProMED-mail post: Undiagnosed Pneumonia – China

<https://promedmail.org/promed-post/?id=6866757&view=true>

Public Health Agency of Canada: Current Travel Health Notices – China

<https://travel.gc.ca/destinations/china>

World Health Organization: Pneumonia of unknown cause – China

<https://www.who.int/csr/don/05-january-2020-pneumonia-of-unkown-cause-china/en/>

## Contact York Region Public Health

If you have any questions, contact York Region Public Health’s Control of Infectious Diseases program at **1-877-464-9675 ext. 73588**, Monday to Friday 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Connect to [york.ca/healthprofessionals](http://york.ca/healthprofessionals) for insights on current public health topics, up-to-date information and resources from York Region Public Health’s programs and services. Visit the **Announcements and Resources** page for our latest communications and to subscribe to our quarterly e-newsletter *Public Health Matters*, which covers topics relevant to today’s health care professionals