

Fact Sheet

Coronavirus COVID-19

What is Coronavirus COVID-19?

COVID-19 is a new virus that was first discovered in December 2019 in Wuhan China. It has since spread to other countries as well. It is a respiratory illness, meaning it can cause an infection in the lungs.

What are the symptoms?

Symptoms of COVID-19 infection are:

- Fever;
- Cough; or
- Shortness of breath.

Who can get the infection?

Anyone can get the infection. Some people only have mild symptoms, while others can get very sick. So far, they are finding that elders and those with other health issues are most at risk of getting very sick.

How does a person get it?

The main way that COVID-19 spreads is through person-to-person contact. When somebody is sick each cough or sneeze can send droplets with the virus into the air, where someone else can breathe it in through their mouth and nose. Viruses can spread in the air up to a few meters distance.

Some viruses can also land on hard surfaces such as tables or doorknobs and live for a while. The amount of time this virus can survive outside the body is not known yet, but this is not believed to be the main way COVID-19 spreads. When someone touches an unclean surface with their hands and then touches their mouth, nose, or eyes, the virus can enter the body and cause an infection.

What is the treatment for it?

At this point there is no medication to treat COVID-19. Those with mild symptoms may rest and recover at home in isolation, while those with more severe symptoms may need to be in the hospital to receive help with breathing and other care.

How can it be prevented?

- Stay home if you are sick with cough or fever. This helps stop you spreading any illness and you will be able to rest and recover. If you are not feeling well, stay home from work, school, daycare, or community gatherings. It is very important to keep others in the community from getting sick as well.
- Wash your hands thoroughly. Use soap and warm water, or hand sanitizer. Washing your hands is very effective in removing the virus from the surface of the skin.
- Try not to touch your face. The virus can travel from your hands in to your body through your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Disinfect and clean surfaces often, especially surfaces you touch often like doorknobs.

As of March 15, 2020 the Chief Public Health Officer of Nunavut is advising travellers arriving in Nunavut from any destination to self-isolate for 14 days after your return.