Coronavirus disease (COVID-19)

What is COVID-19?
Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses. Some coronaviruses can cause illness in people and others can cause illness in animals. Rarely, animal coronaviruses can infect people, and more rarely, these can then spread from person-to-person through close contact. Recently, a novel (new) coronavirus emerged in Wuhan, China which is called the Coronavirus disease or COVID-19.

Transmission/Spread
COVID-19 spreads through the direct contact with the respiratory droplets of someone who is infected with the virus through their cough or sneeze. These droplets can spread up to 2 metres/6 feet. It may also be possible for a person to get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose, or possibly their eyes.

Signs and Symptoms
Those who are infected with COVID-19 may have little to no symptoms. You may not know you have symptoms of COVID-19 because they are similar to a cold or flu. Symptoms may take up to 14 days to appear after exposure to COVID-19.

Some of the symptoms of COVID-19 include:
- Fever
- Cough
- Difficulty breathing
- Muscle aches
- Tiredness
- Sore throat
- Headache
- Runny nose
- New loss of taste or smell

There is an increased risk of more severe illness for people who are aged 65 and over, people with compromised immune systems and people with underlying medical conditions.

Testing
The priority of the health care system is being able to test those most in need. Not everyone requires testing.

Treatment
There is no specific antiviral treatment for COVID-19. People ill with COVID-19 should receive supportive care to help relieve symptoms. People with more severe illness may require hospitalization.
**Prevention**
There is currently no vaccine to prevent COVID-19. The best way to prevent infection is to avoid being exposed to this virus. Prevention measures include:
- Stay Home. Only leave your home to:
  - Access health care or medication
  - Shop for groceries or other essentials, ideally only once per week
  - Walk your dog or get daily exercise
  - When you leave your home, you must maintain physical distancing of at least 2 metres from other people at all times.
  - After being out for these reasons, you must then return home as soon as possible
- Practise physical distancing - keep 2 metres/6 feet apart from others
- Wash your hands often with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands
- Avoid close contact with people who are ill
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces using a household cleaner
- The Government of Canada recommends Canadians avoid all non-essential travel outside of Canada until further notice

**Self-isolation**
Toronto's Medical Officer of Health has issued a COVID-19 Class Order, to ensure that all Torontonians comply with direction to self-isolate. You must stay home and self-isolate if you have:
- COVID-19, OR
- COVID-19 symptoms (e.g., fever, cough, difficulty breathing, muscle aches, tiredness, sore throat, headache, runny nose, new loss of taste or smell), OR
- Been in close contact with someone with COVID-19 or with COVID-19 symptoms

In addition, the Government of Canada has put in place emergency measures that require mandatory 14-day self-isolation for all persons entering Canada, even if they do not have COVID-19 symptoms. In Ontario, this is required by law.

For more information about self-isolation, please see the How to Self-Isolate Fact Sheet.

**More information**
For more information, visit our website at www.toronto.ca/COVID19 or call us at 416-338-7600.