

Memo

To: Community Partners
From: Dr. Kieran Moore, Medical Officer of Health, KFL&A Public Health
Date: March 4, 2020
Re: COVID-19

The COVID-19 virus continues to spread worldwide. In the Kingston, Frontenac, Lennox & Addington area, we have no reported cases to date. In Ontario, there have been 20 confirmed cases. Although the Public Health Agency of Canada has assessed the public health risk associated with COVID-19 as low for Canada, it is important for you to know how the virus is spread and how to lower your risk of contracting the virus.

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses that can cause illnesses ranging from the common cold to more serious respiratory infections like bronchitis or pneumonia. Symptoms include cough, fever, and difficulty breathing. Coronaviruses are spread mainly from person to person through close contact, for example, in a household, workplace or health care centre. Your risk of severe disease may be higher if you have a weakened immune system. This may be the case for older people with chronic disease (e.g., diabetes, cancer, heart or chronic lung disease).

There is no vaccine, nor antiviral available to protect against the 2019 novel coronavirus. However, there are everyday actions you can take to lower your risk of contracting COVID-19 or other viruses that cause respiratory illnesses, including:

- wash your hands often with soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizer
- sneeze and cough into your sleeve
- avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth
- avoid contact with people who are sick
- stay home if you are sick

If you plan to travel, check for Travel Health Notices on the government of Canada website <https://travel.gc.ca/travelling/health-safety/travel-health-notice> to learn if you need to use special precautions or avoid non-essential travel. If you return from travel to an area with a Travel Health Notice for COVID-19, monitor yourself for symptoms for 14 days after leaving the affected area. If you develop symptoms, contact Telehealth Ontario at 1-866-797-0000 or KFL&A Public Health at 613-549-1232.

The COVID-19 situation is changing rapidly. Keep abreast of the latest news by following KFL&A Public Health on Facebook. Visit the Public Health Agency of Canada COVID-19 web page <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection.html> or the Ontario Ministry of Health COVID-19 web page https://www.ontario.ca/page/2019-novel-coronavirus?_ga=2.153463864.1824997082.1583265388-1819065744.1523294829 . If you have questions, call the KFL&A Public Health **COVID-19 Call Centre**; dial 613-549-1232 and follow the prompt to press 4.

