

## COVID-19 FAQ

### 1. **What is COVID-19 (novel coronavirus)?**

Coronaviruses are a family of viruses; some cause respiratory illness in people, ranging from mild (common cold) to severe (pneumonia). COVID-19 is a novel coronavirus that had not been previously detected in humans and is the cause of the current respiratory outbreak. At this time, COVID-19 does not appear to be as severe as other coronaviruses, such as SARS. Many patients have reported only mild symptoms but there is evidence of person-to-person spread.

### 2. **How does it spread?**

COVID-19 is spread via respiratory droplets (similar to influenza) or contact (e.g. if contaminated hands touch your eyes/nose/mouth).

### 3. **What are the symptoms?**

Patients with confirmed COVID-19 have mild to severe respiratory illness with symptoms of fever, cough, shortness of breath and/or pneumonia.

### 4. **What is the incubation period?**

Current estimates suggest the incubation period for COVID-19 is similar to other novel coronaviruses, between 1 and 14 days.

### 5. **How long is a person contagious if they develop COVID-19?**

The period of communicability for COVID-19 is not currently known.

### 6. **Who is most at risk for severe COVID-19?**

Older individuals and people with medical co-morbidities, especially related to cardiovascular disease (including hypertension), chronic respiratory illnesses and diabetes appear to be at the highest risk. The proportion of individuals who are infected with COVID-19 and develop severe disease is still under investigation, but early literature estimates across all ages suggest 80% of diagnosed cases are mild, 15% are moderate and 5% are severe disease.

### 7. **How is it diagnosed?**

Lab testing via nasopharyngeal (NP) swab or aspirate is used for diagnosis to confirm a suspected case of COVID-19.

### 8. **Are there any treatments?**

At this time there are no specific treatments for COVID-19 infections. Supportive and symptomatic care is important particularly for those with severe symptoms of COVID-19.

## COVID-19 FAQ (CONTINUED)

### 9. How can I help protect myself and others from exposure?

- Stay at home when experiencing flu-like symptoms.
- Wash hands thoroughly and often.
- Avoid touching your face as much as possible.
- Use cough/sneeze etiquette – cough/sneeze into your elbow or a tissue, not hands, and then discard tissues in a waste basket and clean hands with alcohol-based hand sanitizer or soap and water immediately.
- Frequently clean high-touch surfaces like counter-tops, keyboards, phones, light switches and doorknobs, etc.

In the workplace, an employee who interacts with the public should:

- Limit sharing of equipment (for example, pens, phones) with co-workers and clients.
- Ensure high-touch surfaces of the work area are cleaned regularly or when changing workstations.
- Wash hands frequently and limit touching of the mouth, eyes, and nose to prevent any virus from being transmitted.
- Have posted information for clients that encourages the use of good hygiene practices (wash hands, cough into sleeve, etc.).

**For up-to-dated information and resources, visit [www.novascotia.ca/coronavirus](http://www.novascotia.ca/coronavirus).**