



First Nations Health Authority  
Health through wellness

501 — 100 Park Royal South  
Coast Salish Territory  
West Vancouver, BC  
Canada V7T 1A2  
T 604.693.6500  
F 604.913.2081  
[www.fnha.ca](http://www.fnha.ca)

## **FNHA Novel Coronavirus Update**

February 1, 2020

As has been widely reported, a new coronavirus (known as 2019-nCoV), is causing respiratory infections mostly in Hubei Province, China. BC has a confirmed case of this new virus in a resident who lives in the Vancouver Coastal Health area. However, the risk to British Columbians from this virus continues to be low. There is no ongoing risk posed to the public from the confirmed case and public health and health care staff are prepared should other cases arise.

While the risk to British Columbians from this virus continues to be low, the threat is being taken seriously. The First Nations Health Authority is working with our provincial partners and the Public Health Agency of Canada to actively monitor the situation. Protocols are in place to screen for infections in any returning travellers and follow up on any identified cases. The Public Health Agency of Canada continues to reassure Canadians that our public health system is well positioned to identify and manage any additional cases.

The novel coronavirus causes a respiratory disease that has similar symptoms to other respiratory illnesses, including fever, dry cough, sore throat and headache. At this time, reports indicate that this virus is spread only after symptoms develop. There is no reason for travellers returning from Hubei province or other locations in China without symptoms to be prevented from working, going to school or attending events unless instructed to do so by public health officers.

We are reminding everyone to follow proper respiratory hygiene etiquette during the cold and flu season. This includes proper hand-washing with soap and water, covering your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing, and staying home when you are sick.

We have received some questions regarding the need for community members to wear face masks for protection from coronavirus. We do not recommend that the general public wear masks. Surgical masks are not designed for this purpose and are unlikely to provide significant protection. Masks are important for anybody who is symptomatic (fever, cough, sneeze) to prevent transmission to others, particularly within health care centers, and for health care workers who are providing care to symptomatic patients.

More information about novel coronavirus can be found on the BC Centre for Disease Control (BCCDC) website: [www.bccdc.ca/about/news-stories/stories/2020/information-on-novel-coronavirus](http://www.bccdc.ca/about/news-stories/stories/2020/information-on-novel-coronavirus).

