

## UPDATE ON THE NOVEL CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)

Dear Community Members,

In anticipation of the upcoming March Break, I am writing to provide you with updated guidance on the novel coronavirus (COVID-19). To date, there have been no confirmed cases in Halton Region and the risk in our community remains low. We encourage you to stay informed by regularly visiting our website at [www.halton.ca/coronavirus](http://www.halton.ca/coronavirus).

Please note that at present, school closures are NOT recommended for the prevention of COVID-19. Although there has been an increase in the number of cases in Canada, there is currently no widespread local transmission and the risk of acquiring infection from a school setting remains low.

### Travel Recommendations

With the upcoming March Break, students and parents should check the Government of Canada [travel advisories](#) for up-to-date information on areas impacted by COVID-19. It is recommended that all individuals avoid non-essential travel to impacted areas. As of March 3, 2020 the list of impacted areas includes: China, Hong Kong, Iran, Japan, Italy, Singapore and South Korea.

### Returning Travelers

All individuals who travel are asked to monitor for signs and symptoms for 14 days after their return. Symptoms of COVID-19 include fever, cough, and/or breathing difficulty.

Iran is now considered a country with high risk exposure. The only other area in the high risk exposure category is Hubei province in China. Therefore, travelers returning from **Hubei province** or **Iran** should self-isolate for 14 days after returning, regardless of symptoms, and notify Halton Region Public Health upon their return.

Travelers returning from other COVID-19 [impacted areas](#) should self-monitor for signs and symptoms for 14 days after their return. If they develop symptoms, they should self-isolate and notify Halton Region Public Health. If anyone in the household develops symptoms after traveling to an impacted area, please immediately self-isolate, do not attend school, and call Halton Region Public Health immediately at 311 or toll free at 1-866-442-5866.

Halton Region Public Health will provide direction and facilitate testing for COVID-19 if needed. Please note that household contacts of symptomatic individuals may also be asked to self-isolate at home while test results are pending.

### How to Prevent the Spread of Respiratory Viruses

The best way to prevent the spread of respiratory viruses including COVID-19 is to:

- Wash hands thoroughly with soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizer;
- Cover mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing; if no tissue is available, then sneeze or cough into the sleeve or arm;
- Clean and disinfect objects and surfaces regularly; and
- Stay home if ill until your symptoms resolve.

The health and well-being of our community remains our highest priority. Halton Region Public Health will continue to keep you updated as new information becomes available.

Dr. Hamidah Meghani  
Medical Officer of Health, Halton Region  
March 4, 2020