COVID 2019
Q&A for Health Care Providers

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Q. How does Novel Coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19) spread?

A: COVID-19 is believed to be spread via respiratory droplets (similar to influenza, MERS, and SARS) or contact (e.g. contaminated hands to mucous membranes).

Q: What are symptoms of COVID-19?

A: Patients with confirmed COVID-19 infection have reportedly had mild to severe respiratory illness with symptoms of fever, cough or shortness of breath. For more information visit PHAC: https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/coronavirus.html.

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Q: What is the incubation period of COVID-19?

A: The incubation period is believed to be between two to 14 days.

See the following links for more information:
US CDC: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/symptoms.html
PHAC: https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/frequently-asked-questions.html

Q: How long is a person contagious if they develop COVID-19?

A: The period of communicability for COVID-19 is not currently known and likely diminishes once symptoms subside.

Q: Who is at risk of COVID-19?

A: People who have any symptoms of COVID-19 AND who meet any of the following criteria should be considered as being at higher risk for having COVID-19 infection:

- Those with history of travel to areas with COVID-19 or history of exposure to symptomatic travelers from areas with confirmed COVID-19;

- Those who had close contact (individuals who provided care for, is a family member of, or who had similar physical contact) with a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19;

- Those who visited a hospital or healthcare facility known to have treated confirmed COVID-19 cases.

Q: What do I do if I suspect my patient has COVID-19?

A: Using the screening criteria above, if you think your patient has COVID-19, have the patient wear a procedure mask immediately. Place the patient in a separate room with contact and droplet precautions. Perform hand hygiene and contact your medical health officer.

Q: How is COVID-19 diagnosed?

A: Lab testing via nasopharyngeal (NP) swab is available for diagnosis to confirm a suspected diagnosis of COVID-19. At this point in time, the medical health officer will facilitate testing of all high risk patients as described above.

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Q: Are there any treatments for COVID-19?

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

Q: Are there vaccines to prevent COVID-19?

A: There is no vaccine available at this point in time.

Q: As a healthcare provider caring for a patient with suspected or known COVID-19, what precautions should I take? What should the patient do?

A: Healthcare providers interacting with a suspect case of COVID-19 should use contact and droplet precautions in addition to routine precautions including hand hygiene for self-protection. Airborne precautions should be added to this during aerosol-generating medical procedures (AGMP). This specifically means:

- Patients should be given a procedure mask as soon as possible and placed in a private room as soon as possible.

- Use of routine precautions for all patients at all times.

- Healthcare providers should don contact and droplet personal protective equipment (i.e. gloves, gown, procedure mask and eye protection. Personal eye glasses are not sufficient eye protection.)

- N95 masks should be worn when performing aerosol-generating medical procedures (note: doing an NP swab is not an AGMP) in addition to the gloves, gown and eye protection.

Q: What can I do to prevent COVID-19?

A: You may be able to prevent getting COVID-19 infection or spreading it to others by:

- Washing hands often and well.

- Avoid touching your face, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands.

- Avoiding close contact with people who are sick unless you are wearing the recommended personal protective equipment.

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- Cleaning and disinfecting surfaces that are frequently touched.

If you are sick:

- Cover your cough and sneezes and wash your hands.

- Stay home/self-isolate when sick (do not go to school, work, or other public areas until symptoms have resolved and you are cleared to come off isolation by public health).

- Notify workplace health and safety if you think you may be sick with COVID-19.

Q: Should I wear masks to protect myself in the hospital?

A: Health care workers should use contact and droplet precautions (gloves, gown, surgical/procedure mask and eye protection) when entering a room where patients suspected or confirmed of being infected with COVID-19 are admitted and in any situation of care provided to a suspected or confirmed case.

An N95 respirator or equivalent should be used when performing aerosol-generating procedures such as tracheal intubation, non-invasive ventilation, tracheotomy, cardiopulmonary resuscitation, manual ventilation before intubation and bronchoscopy.

Q. Where can I find more information?

A: Saskatchewan has set up a dedicated page to keep members of the public and health care providers informed. For care providers, these pages include information on testing procedures and infection prevention and control.

Visit www.saskatchewan.ca/ coronavirus – more information will be added as it becomes available.