



UPDATE ON THE NOVEL CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)

Dear Parents and Guardians,

I am writing to let you know that the first case of COVID-19 in Halton region has been confirmed. A 32-year old female returned from Hawaii on Saturday, March 7, became symptomatic on Monday and was tested at Hamilton Health Sciences' (HHS) Juravinski Hospital on Monday, March 9. She is a frontline healthcare worker at HHS and resides in Burlington. The hospital took all necessary precautions and followed standard operating procedures, including testing and assessment. The patient is currently at home, where she remains in self-isolation.

The risk of acquiring infection in Halton region remains low. We continue to work with our provincial and local health counterparts and with the resident to identify all known contacts who may have been potentially exposed to the virus to assess if there is a potential health risk. We encourage you to stay informed by regularly visiting our website at www.halton.ca/coronavirus.

Travel Recommendations

With the upcoming March Break, all students and parents should check the Government of Canada website for [travel advice](#) and up-to-date information on areas impacted by COVID-19. The Public Health Agency of Canada is recommending that Canadians **avoid all cruise ship travel** due to the ongoing COVID-19 outbreak. Respiratory viruses including the novel coronavirus virus can spread quickly on board [cruises](#) due to the close contact between passengers.

Returning Travelers

The Public Health Agency of Canada recommends that ALL travelers monitor their health for 14 days after returning to Canada. Symptoms of COVID-19 include respiratory symptoms including cough and/or difficulty breathing and/or fever.

Anyone in the household who develops symptoms AND has travelled anywhere outside Canada within the past 14 days OR has had close contact with a COVID-19 case, should self-isolate at home, NOT attend school AND call Halton Region Public Health immediately at 311 or toll free at 1-866-442-5866. Children who have traveled outside of Canada and do not feel sick may continue to attend school and do NOT need to self-isolate.

Contact with a Confirmed COVID-19 Case

Halton Region Public Health closely monitors all close contacts of confirmed cases and provides directions for them and their household members. If an individual is identified to have close contact with a COVID-19 confirmed case, they will be asked to self-isolate for 14 days. The self-isolation direction applies only to the close contact and not their household members. Students from these households can attend school unless otherwise directed by Public Health.

How to Prevent the Spread of Respiratory Viruses

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

- **Stay at home if ill**
- Wash your hands frequently with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand rub with 60-90% alcohol
- Cough and sneeze into your sleeve or tissue
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth without having washed your hands
- Frequently clean commonly touched surfaces

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 11, 2020

Regional Municipality of Halton

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