

January 26, 2020

Statement from Dr. Eileen de Villa, Medical Officer of Health, Toronto Public Health:

Toronto Public Health (TPH) is actively following up with all of the people who were close contacts of Toronto's first presumptive confirmed case of the novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV). This individual recently returned from Wuhan/China on China Southern Airlines flight CZ311, which arrived in Toronto on January 22 from Guangzhou. We are informing these people that they may have been exposed to a potential health risk, what signs and symptoms they should look out for, and when and what type of medical treatment should be sought out, if that becomes necessary. This work is part of routine public health follow-up of a case of an infectious disease.

Passengers on this flight who are not contacted by public health and subsequently become ill with respiratory signs and symptoms such as a cough, fever, or difficulty breathing are recommended to:

- stay at home while you are sick
- call your local health department for further guidance which may include testing for the novel coronavirus

TPH has heard from local hospital partners that people are presenting to their emergency departments without signs of illness. While we appreciate that people may have concerns, and that people may worry about their health, we encourage people who were on this flight and who do not have signs of illness to continue with their routine activities and we ask that these people do not present to the healthcare system.

The risk to our community remains low. TPH continues to actively monitor the situation in collaboration with provincial and national health agencies, and stakeholders that include local hospitals, airports and community agencies.

As a reminder, we are currently in the midst of our annual cold and flu season and, as such, we would like to remind everyone of the importance of good infection prevention and control practices to help protect against getting sick and prevent the spread of illness. These practices include:

- getting an annual flu vaccine available from clinics and pharmacies,
- washing your hands frequently with soap and water or using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer,
- covering your mouth and nose when you sneeze or cough,
- sneezing or coughing into your sleeve or arm if you don't have a tissue; and
- staying home if you are sick

Toronto's first presumptive confirmed case of the novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV) is stable and remains hospitalized. While we appreciate that many people have questions, we ask that people respect the person's privacy as they recover in the hospital.

Media contact: Lenore Bromley, Toronto Public Health, 416-338-7974,
Lenore.Bromley@toronto.ca