

Novel coronavirus (COVID-19)

Public health officials are working closely with colleagues across the country, and partners here in Nova Scotia, to prepare and respond to COVID-19 in Canada.

This new virus hasn't been seen in humans before and is spreading around the world. The first cases in Canada were reported in January 2020.



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Information about closures and restrictions because of the virus.



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Nova Scotia is testing for COVID-19 and reporting results daily.



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Advice about prevention and being prepared.



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What to do if you're planning to travel, or if you've recently returned from another country.



[Government's response to coronavirus](#)

How our health system is monitoring and preparing for coronavirus cases.


Latest news

- [Two New Presumptive Cases of COVID-19 in Nova Scotia](#)
- [First Presumptive Cases of COVID-19 in Nova Scotia; New Prevention Measures](#)
- [New Travel Measures for Nova Scotia Public Sector Employees](#)
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Stay informed

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 [Latest press conferences \(YouTube\)](#)

Alerts and notices

Travel advisories and self-isolation requirements

The Government of Canada has issued an [official travel advisory](#) asking Canadians to avoid non-essential travel outside Canada until further notice.

The Province of Nova Scotia, under the authority of the Health Protection Act, is requiring anyone who has travelled outside Canada to self-isolate for 14 days upon return, even if you are without any symptoms.

Public health inspectors will be onsite at the Halifax International Airport and the J.A. Douglas McCurdy Sydney Airport.

Notices and closures

The following restrictions are in place under the Authority of the Health Protection Act:

- Long-term care facilities are closed to all visitors.
- Public schools will be closed for two weeks following March Break (weeks of 23 March and 30 March).
- All licensed and unlicensed childcare providers are required to close starting 17 March through 3 April.
- March Break camps are cancelled.
- Casinos in Halifax and Sydney will close as of 12 a.m. on 16 March and bar owners can no longer operate VLTs.

Organizations and businesses are required to practise social distancing of 2 metres (6 feet) and keep gatherings below 150 or much smaller, if possible. This applies to restaurants, bars, movie theatres, and other gathering spots.

[Nova Scotia Health Authority](#) and the [IWK Health Centre](#) are limiting visitors to prevent the spread of any respiratory illness, including COVID-19.

Check the [closures page](#) for up-to-date provincial government office and facility closures.

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COVID-19 testing data

Nova Scotia is testing for COVID-19. Updated 16 March 2020.

Confirmed Positive *	0
Presumptive Positive**	5
Negative***	671

* Confirmed cases are those confirmed by the National Microbiology Lab in Winnipeg.

** Presumptive cases are those found to have a presumptive positive result from the QEII Health Sciences Centre's Microbiology Lab and have been sent to the National Microbiology Lab and are awaiting confirmation.

*** Negative cases are those found to have a negative confirmation by either the QEII Health Sciences Centre's Microbiology Lab or the National Microbiology Lab.

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When to seek help

Symptoms

Symptoms of novel coronavirus include fever, cough, difficulty breathing, and pneumonia.

The severity can range from mild to severe, and in some cases, infection can lead to death. Current information suggests most people don't experience severe illness or need to be hospitalized.

What to do if you think you might have been exposed to COVID-19

If you've travelled

The Province of Nova Scotia, under the authority of the Health Protection Act, is requiring anyone who has travelled outside Canada to self-isolate for 14 days from the day they get back to Canada. You must self-isolate even if you don't have symptoms.

If you've travelled recently and you develop a fever, with a temperature 38°C or higher, or a cough, you should call 811 for assessment.

When to call 811

Not everyone who has concerns about COVID-19 needs to call 811. To find out if you need to call, use the [COVID-19 online self-assessment](#).

Testing

Nova Scotia Health Authority has established COVID-19 assessment centres. If you need in-person assessment, 811 will refer you to a centre. Don't go to a COVID-19 assessment centre unless 811 referred you.

The Province of Nova Scotia, under the authority of the Health Protection Act, is requiring anyone who has travelled outside Canada to self-isolate for 14 days upon return, even if you are symptom-free.

If you develop a fever, with a temperature 38°C or higher, or a cough, you should call 811 for assessment.

Nova Scotia Health Authority has established [COVID-19 assessment centres](#). If you need in-person assessment, 811 will refer you to a centre. Don't go to a COVID-19 assessment centre unless 811 referred you.

To help you better understand if you need to talk to 811, please review [this simple questionnaire](#).

If you self-isolate or feel unwell

If you've been directed to self-isolate, you can get information from Nova Scotia Health Authority Public Health by [contacting the nearest office](#).

Avoid close contact with people with chronic conditions, compromised immune systems and older adults.

Don't have visitors to your home.

Avoid situations like social gatherings, work, school, daycare, or visiting other people who are in a health care facility or long-term care residence.

Limit taking public transit, taxis and ride sharing.

Wash your hands often with soap and warm water, for at least 20 seconds. Use hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available.

Cover your mouth and nose with your arm when coughing or sneezing.

The Government of Canada has additional resources about [how to self isolate](#) and [how to care for someone with COVID-19](#).

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Protecting yourself from coronavirus

There are currently no vaccines available to protect you against the novel coronavirus. Nova Scotians are encouraged to think about what they can do to stay healthy and prevent the spread of any respiratory illness, including COVID-19.

There are [simple, practical things you can do to prepare](#) in case you or someone in your household becomes ill or if COVID-19 becomes common in your community.

Advice for individuals and families

Reducing contact with other people

Government is requiring individuals, employers and organizations to limit social gatherings to no more than 150 people.

Nova Scotians should think about extra measures they can take to help reduce the spread of COVID-19. Consider things like:

- avoiding close contact with other people – stay about 2 metres (6 feet) apart
- avoiding crowds and gatherings (like parties, weddings, sports events and other group activities)
- shopping and taking public transportation in off-peak hours
- greeting one another with a wave instead of a handshake, hug, or kiss
- staying home if you're sick, especially if you have a fever or a new cough

Practise good hand hygiene

Wash or sanitize hands often, particularly:

- before and after preparing or eating food
- after touching pets
- after handling waste, dirty laundry or bathroom use
- whenever hands look dirty
- after shaking hands

Washing with soap and water is preferred – rubbing hands together removes visible dirt and germs. Use disposable paper towels (preferred) for drying hands, or a reusable towel that is laundered often.

If soap and water aren't available (and your hands aren't visibly dirty), use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol. Use enough to cover the fronts and backs of both hands and between all fingers. Rub hands together until they feel dry.

Use cough and sneeze etiquette

Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue. Dispose used tissues in the garbage and wash your hands, or use an

alcohol-based hand rub immediately after.

If you don't have a tissue, cough and sneeze into your elbow, not your hand.

Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.

Clean high-touch surfaces and objects often

Viruses can live on surfaces for several days. Frequent cleaning and disinfecting of high-touch surfaces and objects can reduce germs and prevent infection. You should clean at least once a day, or more if needed.

Clean and disinfect items like doorknobs, light switches, railings, toilets and tabletops daily. Wash with soapy water first. Then disinfect using household cleaning products, following the directions on the label, or a solution of 1 part bleach to 9 parts water.

Disinfect phones, remote controls, computers and other handheld devices with 70% alcohol or wipes.

Wash or launder clothing, sheets and towels on a regular basis.

Dispose of garbage on a regular basis. Wash hands after.

Make a plan

Being prepared is good advice any time.

All Nova Scotians should have an emergency kit and basic supplies that you/your family may need for up to 72 hours. Don't panic buy or stockpile.

Make sure your prescriptions are filled.

Think about what you'll do if you or member of your family becomes sick and needs care.

Talk to your employer about working from home if you need to self-isolate or care for a family member who is ill.

Communicate with family and friends. Let them know you're making a plan. Share yours with them. Check in on each other and run essential errand should one of you become ill.

If you become ill, stay home until you are no longer showing symptoms.

Mental well-being

A new virus like COVID-19 can create fear and anxiety. The best ways to address concerns and support each other include:

- listen and provide reassurance – it's normal to have questions
- get information from reliable sources
- address questions and correct misinformation
- watch for discrimination or bullying related to COVID-19
- maintain normal routines and programming as much as possible

For help with mental health concerns, call 811 or the Mental Health Crisis Line toll-free at 1-888-429-8167.

Advice for employers and community groups

Employers should think about what they can do to help staff stay healthy and prevent spread of any respiratory illness, including COVID-19.

Support your employees if they need to stay home

The Province of Nova Scotia, under the authority of the Health Protection Act, is requiring anyone who has travelled outside Canada to self-isolate for 14 days upon return, even if you are without any symptoms. Consider how you can support your employees if they need to stay home.

Talk with your employees about flexible hours or alternative work arrangements if they need to stay home. Don't ask them for a doctor's note if they get sick or need to self-isolate.

Consider limiting events

Businesses and community groups are encouraged to limit events and social gatherings to no more than 150 people or much smaller, if possible. This could include events like weddings, religious services, movie screenings and concerts. This will help protect vulnerable Nova Scotians who are at risk for serious illness.

Other steps businesses and community groups can take

As well as following the advice for individuals, businesses and community groups should:

- make sure you have a business continuity or emergency plan in place
- think about what you'll do if several of your employees get sick
- post handwashing signs and provide alcohol-based hand rub to encourage frequent hand hygiene
- make sure spaces and surfaces are cleaned
- remove non-essential items like magazines, stuffed toys, and other items that can't be easily cleaned from reception areas

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Travel advice

The Government of Canada has issued an [official travel advisory](#) asking Canadians to avoid non-essential travel outside Canada until further notice.

The Province of Nova Scotia, under the authority of the Health Protection Act, is requiring anyone who has travelled outside Canada to self-isolate for 14 days upon return, even if you are without any symptoms.

Anyone who travels outside Canada may come in contact with the novel coronavirus. Travellers are reminded to follow health precautions like washing their hands often, avoiding contact with persons who are sick, and practicing proper cough and sneeze etiquette.

If you or a family member chooses to travel outside Canada with these restrictions in place, please consider if:

- the Government of Canada has issued a [travel health notice](#) for the country or region you plan to visit
- you or a family member have a compromised immune system
- you have, or can get, appropriate travel insurance in case you become sick while away

The Public Health Agency of Canada is recommending that [Canadians avoid all cruise ship travel](#) due to COVID-19 because the virus can spread quickly on ships due to the close contact between passengers.

Government's response to coronavirus

Nova Scotia's health care system is actively monitoring and detecting potential cases of novel coronavirus. This work includes:

- establishing a patient screening process for use by all front-line health care workers
- monitoring hospitals for potential cases
- applying effective public health and infection control measures
- communicating directly with community organizations and universities
- sharing accurate, up-to-date information with our partners and Nova Scotians

Related information

- [2019 Novel Coronavirus infection](#)
- [Symptoms and treatment](#)
- [Latest travel advice](#)

Downloads

Printable information and posters

- [Government of Canada resources](#)
- [Proper hand washing poster \(PDF 185Kb\)](#)
- [Employers and community groups factsheet \(PDF 194Kb\)](#)
- [Individuals and families \(PDF 193Kb\)](#)

Contact

Government of Canada novel coronavirus information line

Toll free: [1-833-784-4397](tel:1-833-784-4397)

