



Population and Public Health
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Dear Physicians, Nurse Practitioners and Emergency Room and ICU staff,

RE: Screening for and response to novel influenza and coronavirus infections

While the risk of a novel coronavirus or novel influenza virus (such as the avian influenza H7N9 virus) is currently low in Canada, it is important that all health care providers are aware of key steps that should be taken.

Please think of novel coronavirus or novel influenza virus infection if a patient presents:

- With fever (over $>38^{\circ}$ C) and cough or breathing difficulty, and radiographic evidence of infiltrates consistent with pneumonia or respiratory distress syndrome

AND

- Recent travel or visit to a WHO reported "affected area"¹ of severe respiratory illness (SRI) or a setting that is associated with a cluster of SRI; or has had close contact with a suspect or probable case of SRI; or recent exposure/close contact to a potential source of avian influenza virus²

AND

- Their current illness is not consistent with another known cause.

The attached updated SRI screening tool assists in determining if the above factors should prompt you to:

THINK – implement appropriate infection control precautions and inform infection control.

TELL – notify the Medical Health Officer (MHO) by phone within 12 hours. Consult infectious disease or other specialists as appropriate.

TEST – order appropriate tests including nasopharyngeal swab in viral transport media, clearly marked "urgent: for SRI screen".

Updated advice on testing and other information will be available at

<http://www.health.gov.sk.ca/avian-influenza-h7n9>.

Guidance for the general public is also available at <http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/phn-asp/2013/h7n9-0403-eng.php>.

Sincerely,

Julie Kryzanowski
MD, CCFP, FRCPC
Deputy Medical Health Officer

¹ <http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/eri-ire/index-eng.php> (currently countries in the middle east and China)

² such as reports of illness or die offs in domestic poultry flocks, live poultry markets, wild or pet birds anywhere in the world including Canada; or has current illness that is not consistent with other known cause