



GOVERNMENT OF BERMUDA  
**Department of Communications**

PRESS RELEASE

*27<sup>th</sup> January 2020*

**Coronavirus Update from the Ministry of Health**

As of today, the World Health Organization (WHO) confirmed that the risk of the coronavirus in China is very high, and risk to all other countries is high, due to extensive global travel.

Therefore, the Ministry of Health's Epidemiology and Surveillance Unit (ESU) have raised the local threat level from "Guarded" to "Elevated" and are in a state of heightened preparedness for a Public Health Emergency.

The Minister of Health, the Hon. Kim N. Wilson said, "Bermuda's routine public health surveillance activities have been increased through the well-established collaborations between the ESU and the hospital, physician offices, Customs and Immigration Departments. Enhanced monitoring of patients presenting with respiratory illnesses will continue, guided by recommendations from WHO, and our regional authorities, Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) and Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA). The public is advised to act on the recommendations of the Epidemiology & Surveillance Unit."

**For travelers arriving to Bermuda:**

- If you have travelled within the past 14 days to China or an area known to have human-to-human transmission of 2019-nCoV, please identify yourselves upon arrival to Customs and Immigration officials who will provide you with a health information card for follow up if necessary.
- If you are ill upon arrival, inform airport personnel for assistance. If you become ill with a respiratory infection following travel to China or another affected region, call your healthcare provider in advance, inform them of your travel history and seek medical care.

**For travelers leaving Bermuda:**

- Avoid non-essential travel to China and to jurisdictions where there is confirmed human-to-human transmission of the 2019-nCoV. Affected areas are updated continuously by World Health Organization (WHO) website: <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>.
- Ensure you have updated your routine adult or childhood immunization, including the seasonal influenza vaccine.

- Hand hygiene and safe food practices are essential (see WHO website)
- Avoid close contact with people suffering from acute respiratory infections, as much as possible in travels
- Avoid contact with farm animals or wild animals
- If symptoms of respiratory illness occur during or up to 2 weeks after your travel, you are encouraged to seek medical attention and share your travel history with your healthcare provider.

**For the resident who does not intend to travel:**

- Maintaining one's general health is critical to avoid preventable visits to healthcare facilities or the hospital. Ensure prescription medications are refilled and take medications as prescribed.
- Ensure routine vaccinations are up to date. If you have not had a seasonal influenza shot get one from your healthcare provider or the Department of Health Clinic (67 Victoria Street, Hamilton). Reducing visits to our Emergency Department and hospital for vaccine preventable diseases will help the island manage a public health emergency.
- If you are ill with an infectious disease, respiratory or gastrointestinal, please stay home from work and social gatherings until you no longer have a fever or cough, or vomiting and diarrhea.
- Always cover coughs with tissues or sleeves and practice thorough hand hygiene, washing for at least 20 seconds and generally avoiding touching face with unwashed hands.
- Consider restricting non-essential travel to areas known to be affected with the 2019-nCoV. These areas are updated regularly by WHO. For information see: <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>.
- The WHO website or the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention ([www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)) are reliable sources of global information. Use scientific, trustworthy websites for information to avoid being misled or alarmed unnecessarily by rumor and misinformation posted on social media.