What is COVID-19?

COVID-19 comes from a large family of viruses called Coronaviruses. Some Coronaviruses cause infections from common colds to pneumonias.

The symptoms of COVID-19 are similar to any other flu or cold:

- Fever
- Cough
- Feeling very tired

How can I get COVID-19?

- Coming in contact with a sick person or things they touched then touching your eyes, nose or mouth, will spread the virus.
- You can also catch it when you breathe in droplets an infected person spreads through coughing or sneezing.

When you first get the virus, you won't know you have it. There's an "incubation period" of 1-14 days before you feel sick. During this time you will spread the virus when you cough or sneeze. Because many people only have mild symptoms, sharing the virus is easy to do.

Who should be screened for COVID-19?

People with fever and/or a cough, shortness of breath, or difficulty breathing, are most likely to have COVID-19. You should be tested if you aren't feeling well, have any of these symptoms or one of these describes your situation:

- Recently travelled anywhere outside of Canada
- Had contact with a person who has symptoms that travelled outside of Canada within 14 days of getting sick
- Had contact with someone who has or may have COVID-19

Most people get better without needing any special treatment but about 1 in 6 people become very sick with breathing problems. Older people and those with other health problems like high blood pressure, heart or lung problems or diabetes are more likely to become very ill and experience further complications from it.

If you think you may have COVID-19, are being released after having a swab test done, or were on isolation in custody:

- Call Health Link 811 for advice and assistance.
- If you are going to a shelter or other community agency on release please tell the staff about your situation and they can assist; if you are going home try to stay isolated until you receive advice from 811.
- If you are not very sick, don't go to a doctor, walk-in clinic, emergency or lab without calling Health Link first.
- Call 911 if you are very sick and need health care right away. Tell them if you might have COVID-19.

How to protect yourself and others from COVID-19:

- Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds often and well
- Avoid touching your face, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands
- Stay away from people who are sick
- Stay at home and away from others if you are feeling sick and avoid having visitors.
- Clean and disinfect things that are touched a lot
- Avoid situations where you would come in contact with a lot of other people (this is also called 'social distancing')
- Avoid sharing items like dishes, drinking glasses, cups, spoons, knives and forks, towels or pillows. Clean them properly.
- When you're sick, cover your mouth when you cough and sneeze and then wash your hands