



Town of  
Milk River

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## RE: COVID-19 (CORONAVIRUS) UPDATE

MARCH 17, 2020

The Town of Milk River will remain as available as possible to residents during this time. The situation is quickly changing, and we will provide updates regarding Town operations as diligently as possible.

**As of Tuesday March 17, 2020, the Town Office has closed the window to the public.**

- Staff will be available by phone between the hours of 9:00 am and 3:00 pm.
- Online or over the phone bill payments are encouraged.
- Cash and debit card payments are not being accepted at this time.

**If you have returned home from anywhere outside of Canada after MARCH 12, please do not leave your home for a minimum of 14 days.**

All information in this newsletter is from the Alberta Health Services website. Only information from a credible source, like AHS or Government websites should be taken seriously. The spread of false information is harmful to everyone.

The intention behind closures, cancelations, and social distancing recommendations is to prevent the overwhelming of health care facilities and to slow the spread of the virus. It is a preventative measure.

Please be kind and patient during this time. We hope you follow these important recommendations and stay safe and healthy.

-Staff at the Town of Milk River



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[milkriver.ca](http://milkriver.ca)

## Info for Travellers

Returning to Alberta **on or after March 12th**:

- ALL travellers who returned to Alberta on or after March 12th are required to [self-isolate](#) immediately, for 14 days, and monitor for symptoms.

Returned to Alberta **before March 12th**:

- Travellers who returned to Alberta from Italy, Iran, the Hubei Province of China or the Grande Princess Cruise ship, before March 12th, must also [self-isolate](#), and must monitor themselves for symptoms for 14 days after return. If symptoms do develop, stay home and call 811 immediately.
- Travellers who returned to Alberta from other destinations, before March 12th, are encouraged to self-isolate, and monitor themselves for symptoms.

Testing is currently focused on individuals who have traveled outside Canada or had contact with someone diagnosed as having COVID-19, or have developed symptoms of COVID-19.

If you **have symptoms**:

- Anyone who has symptoms, including cough, runny nose, fever or sore throat, must also self-isolate for 14 days. Please do not visit a hospital, physician's office, lab or healthcare facility without consulting Health Link (811) first. If you need immediate medical attention, call 911 and advise them that you may have COVID-19.

You can **self-isolate** by following these [guidelines](#), which include:

- Avoid close contact with other people, especially those with chronic conditions, a compromised immune system, or seniors
- Do not attend work, school, social events or any other public gatherings
- Watch for symptoms like fever, cough or shortness of breath in yourself or family members
- Call [Health Link 811](#) at the first sign of symptoms. Call from home before going to a health care facility, unless severely ill.
- If severely ill and in need of immediate medical attention call 911 and inform them that you may have COVID-19.

## What Should I Do If I Think I Have COVID-19?

If you have symptoms such as fever, cough and difficulty breathing and have travelled outside Canada or have been exposed to someone who has COVID-19, stay home and call Health Link 811. If you are not seriously ill, **do not** go to a physician's office, a health care facility or a lab without consulting with Health Link 811 first. Call 911 if you are seriously ill and need immediate medical attention and inform them that you may have COVID-19.

## About COVID-19

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses. Some cause respiratory illness in people, ranging from mild common colds to severe illnesses. Others cause illness in animals. Rarely, animal coronaviruses can infect people, and more rarely, these can then spread from person to person through close contact. Novel coronaviruses are new strains of the virus that have not been previously identified in humans.

## Spread

COVID-19 is believed to be spread mainly by coughing, sneezing or direct contact with someone who is sick with COVID-19 or with surfaces they have recently touched.

## COVID-19 vs. Influenza

In some ways, COVID-19 is similar to influenza (also known as the flu):

- Both COVID-19 and the flu cause respiratory disease in people who get sick.
- Both are spread the same way, via small droplets from the nose and mouth.
- Neither one is spread through the air over long distances and times, unlike a disease like the measles.

However, there are some key differences between COVID-19 and the flu:

- COVID-19 does not appear to transmit as efficiently as influenza. Only those with symptoms seem to be mainly spreading the disease. This means that when people with symptoms are isolated, controlling spread is possible.
- We currently have no specific vaccine or treatment for COVID-19.
- COVID-19 causes severe disease in a higher percentage of cases than seasonal influenza. Estimates of mortality in COVID-19 cases depend on many things, but on average they range from about 1-2 deaths per 100 people infected. By comparison, seasonal influenza is deadly in about 1 in every 1000 who are infected.
- Because COVID-19 can cause such a serious illness, it is critical to keep it from spreading by having people with a cough or fever stay home and away from others.

## Prevention

To help protect you and your family against all respiratory illnesses, including flu and COVID-19, you should:

- [Wash your hands often and well](#)
- Avoid touching your face, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick
- Clean and disinfect surfaces that are frequently touched
- Stay at home and away from others if you are feeling ill
- Contact your primary health provider or [Health Link 811](#) if you have questions or concerns about your health
- [When sick, cover your cough and sneezes and then wash your hands](#)

## Symptoms

Symptoms for COVID-19 are similar to those for influenza or other respiratory illnesses. The most common symptoms include:

- fever
- cough
- extreme tiredness

Most people (about 80%) recover from this disease without needing special treatment.

However, it can cause serious illness. Those who are older, and those with other medical problems are more likely to develop serious illness, which can include:

- difficulty breathing
- pneumonia

There is a risk of death in severe cases.

While we are still learning about how COVID-19 affects people, older persons and persons with pre-existing medical conditions (such as high blood pressure, heart disease, lung disease, cancer or diabetes) appear to develop serious illness more often than others.

Call [Health Link 811](#) at the first sign of symptoms. Call from home before going to a health care facility, unless severely ill.

Anyone who is ill with influenza-like symptoms such as fever or cough is recommended to stay home for 14 days after their illness has started.

## How to Prepare

For Albertans looking to prepare for COVID-19, Alberta public health officials are recommending the following:

Create a household plan of action. This can include these elements:

- Talk with the people who need to be included in your plan.
- Meet with household members, other relatives, and friends to discuss what to do if a COVID-19 outbreak occurs in your community and what the needs of each person will be.
- Plan ways to care for those who might be at greater risk for serious complications. This includes practical steps like ensuring you have sufficient medication and determining what supplies are needed, and if they can be delivered.
- Talk with your neighbors about emergency planning.
- Create a list of local organizations that you and your household can contact in the event you need access to information, health care services, support, and resources.
- Create an emergency contact list.

Practice good personal health habits and plan for home-based actions:

- Practice everyday preventive actions, like those listed in the prevention section.
- Choose a room in your home that can be used to separate sick household members from those who are healthy. Identify a separate bathroom for the sick person to use, if possible. Plan to clean these rooms, as needed, when someone is sick.

Plan for potential changes at your workplace.

- Learn about your employer's emergency operations plan.
- Ask about what sick-leave policies and telework options are available if needed.

Stockpiling of goods is not recommended at this time. While it's always best practice to have three days worth of supplies on-hand, we are not recommending Albertans purchase food or other materials in bulk.

## Public Health Restrictions (Mass Gatherings & School)

To help prevent the spread of COVID-19, Alberta has implemented new public health restrictions.

- Effective immediately, student attendance at schools is prohibited.
- Post-secondary classes are cancelled. Campuses will remain open.
- All licensed child care facilities, out-of-school care programs and preschool programs are closed indefinitely.
- All long-term care and other continuing care facilities are advised to limit visitation to essential visitors only.
- Places of worship are no longer exempt from restrictions on mass gatherings.

### Events

The following events should be cancelled:

- Events with more than 250 attendees.
  - This includes large sporting events, conferences and community events.
  - It does not include grocery stores, airports or shopping centres
- Events with more than 50 attendees and expects to have international participants, or involves critical infrastructure staff, seniors, or other high-risk populations

Events that do not meet this criteria can proceed, but risk mitigation must be in place, such as sanitizer stations and distancing between attendees.