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# CREDITS

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COVID-19: Pandemic, Fear and Precautions

Video duration – 20:52

It’s being compared to the largest pandemic in history, the Spanish flu of 1918, which infected a third of the world’s population. Novel Coronavirus or Covid-19 is a new strain of flu sweeping the planet, which causes severe respiratory illness. The World Health Organisation has put the global fatality rate for coronavirus as high as 3.4 percent. The outbreak started in Wuhan, China. Iran and Italy became the next big countries to see widespread infection rates. As the coronavirus spread across the globe, health officials declared it a pandemic – meaning it was expanding and could no longer be contained. What can be learned from this epidemic and how it was first handled?

Related Content on Curio.ca

• The COVID-19 pandemic in Canada (Curio.ca collection)
• Ancient Plague Identified (CBC Radio – Quirks & Quarks)
• Black Dawn: The Next Pandemic
• The Flu Fighter (The National)
• News in Review, November 2009 – Keeping Up With The Swine Flu
• News in Review, January 2006 – Avian Flu: Preparing for a Pandemic
VIDEO REVIEW
BEFORE VIEWING

Take a look at the chart below. The chart includes important information and symptoms of the common cold, flu and COVID-19 — a disease that entered the human population in late 2019.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Identifying the symptoms</th>
<th>Cold</th>
<th>Flu</th>
<th>COVID-19</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Incubation period</td>
<td>1-3 days</td>
<td>1-4 days</td>
<td>2-14 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Symptom onset</td>
<td>Gradual</td>
<td>Abrupt</td>
<td>1-14 days (can vary)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Typical length of illness</td>
<td>7-10 days</td>
<td>3-7 days</td>
<td>7-30 days or more (varies widely)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Symptoms</th>
<th>Cold</th>
<th>Flu</th>
<th>COVID-19</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fever</td>
<td>Rare</td>
<td>Common</td>
<td>Common</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fatigue</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>Common</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cough</td>
<td>Mild</td>
<td>Common (usually dry)</td>
<td>Common (usually dry)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Symptoms</td>
<td>Cold</td>
<td>Flu</td>
<td>COVID-19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sneezing</td>
<td>Common</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aches and pains</td>
<td>Common</td>
<td>Common</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Runny or stuffy nose</td>
<td>Common</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>Rare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sore throat</td>
<td>Common</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diarrhea</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Sometimes for children</td>
<td>Rare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Headache</td>
<td>Rare</td>
<td>Common</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shortness of breath</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


NOTE: To date, a dry cough with fever, fatigue, aches and shortness of breath have been the most common signs that a person may have COVID-19, but symptoms vary from person to person.
Questions

1. Why is it important to know the symptoms of each illness?
2. Why might people worry that they have COVID-19 when they actually have a cold or the flu?

WHILE VIEWING

1. The novel coronavirus that causes the disease known as COVID-19 originated in Wuhan, China. ❑ TRUE or ❑ FALSE

2. A pandemic happens when a virus or disease is spreading and can no longer be contained, moving progressively through a community. ❑ TRUE or ❑ FALSE

3. Experts believe that epidemics are more likely to grow in democratic societies like Canada. ❑ TRUE or ❑ FALSE

4. COVID-19 emerged from a live market in China. The likely animal that the virus came from is a:
5. According the medical journal “The Lancet,” China had around __________ cases of COVID-19 by the end of January 2020:
   a. 450  b. 4500  c. 75 000  d. 450 000

6. According to Dr. Bonnie Henry, the B.C. Provincial Health Officer, COVID-19 lives for a very long time outside the body so people should wear gloves all the time. ❑ TRUE or ❑ FALSE

7. According to the most up-to-date information, 23 million people were quarantined in China while 2.8 million were diagnosed with COVID-19, killing 112 000 people. ❑ TRUE or ❑ FALSE

8. According to Dr. Isaac Bogoch of the University Health Network, impeccable hand hygiene is one of the keys to controlling the spread of COVID-19. ❑ TRUE or ❑ FALSE
TALK PROMPT #1

Consider pausing the video and giving students the opportunity to talk to an elbow partner for a few minutes or use these questions as part of a class discussion.

Pause the video after Terence McKenna signs off from his report.

a. Why do experts believe that epidemics are more likely to emerge in authoritarian countries? How was this the case with COVID-19 in China?

b. Why are wild animal markets a major problem when it comes to viruses jumping from animals to humans?

c. Why do some people believe that the World Health Organization (WHO) were too trusting when it came to the Chinese reporting of COVID-19’s progress in Wuhan?
TALK PROMPT #2
Pause the video after Matthew Yu finishes his conversation with Dr. Bonnie Henry, the B.C. Provincial Health Officer.

a. How is the flu similar to the coronavirus that causes the disease COVID-19?
b. What should people do to protect themselves?
c. What misinformation does Matthew Yu expose in his conversation with Dr. Henry?

TALK PROMPT #3
Play the video until the end.

a. What misinformation did fact-checkers at TEMP, Matilda.es, Boom and Lead Stories discover when it comes to COVID-19?
b. Why does Dr. Isaac Bogoch believe we need to be cautious when it comes to the statistics related to COVID-19?
c. What advice does Dr. Bogoch give people when it comes to COVID-19?
AFTER VIEWING

Create a public service announcement (PSA) that tells people how to protect themselves against infections. Make sure you include the following information:

- Wash your hands
- Use hand sanitizer
- Sneeze into your sleeve
- Stay at least two metres away from sick people
- Avoid touching your face
- Stay home when you’re sick

Additional information that should be part of your PSA:

- How diseases spread
- The symptoms of common illnesses (see chart in the Before Viewing section)
- Practicing social distancing

Your PSA can be in a poster format or a multimedia format.
What we're seeing right now with COVID-19, it appears as though a lot of people have mild infections and so they recover quite quickly and quite well from the infection. But there are a smaller proportion of people who are getting severely ill.

– Dr. Susy Hota, University Health Network (Toronto)

Around the world, misinformation about coronavirus is spreading faster than the disease itself.

– Andrea Bellemare, CBC News journalist
THE STORY

Never seen before
In December 2019, a man died in Wuhan, China. When health investigators couldn’t determine what killed the man, they sent their lab work to the World Health Organization (WHO) for confirmation of the nature of the virus. Meanwhile, more sick people flooded Wuhan hospitals with the same symptoms. By the end of the month, the WHO warned the world that a new coronavirus — one never previously seen — had found its way into the human population. By the time the warning was issued, the virus had spread exponentially in Hubei province in China and made its way to Thailand and Japan.

Confronting a known virus
When doctors confront a known virus — like Influenza A (the flu) — they have a protocol that they follow to help a person get better. However, viruses can be tricky to treat and, in the case of the flu, 500 to 1500 Canadians
succumb to the virus, and the ensuing diseases it causes, every year. Despite the best efforts of health care professionals worldwide, the three to five million cases of influenza result in the deaths of between 250,000 and 500,000 people annually.

**An unknown virus!**

So it is not hard to see why the WHO and health professionals all over the world were worried when a new mutation of a coronavirus emerged in late 2019. Coronaviruses represent a large family of viruses and it is not uncommon for new ones to emerge. The last significant coronavirus entered the human population in 2003 when SARS emerged in China, eventually making its way to Canada and settling in Toronto. SARS spread to 8,000 people around the world and killed nearly 800. Fortunately, a global effort led to the containment of SARS, sparing the world a massive pandemic.

Today, SARS only exists in laboratories for scientists to study.

**Challenge of containment**

By the end of January 2020, the WHO declared a global public health emergency. It was during this period that the virus spread rapidly in China, with 75,000 people catching the coronavirus by the third week of February. Meanwhile, infected travellers unwittingly left China and brought the virus to places around the
world. Italy, Iran, Spain, Germany, the U.S., France, Switzerland and South Korea became COVID-19 hotspots, eventually infecting over 600,000 people and killing over 30,000 by the end of March.

COVID-19 in Canada

The virus quickly spread to many other countries — including Canada. The first reported COVID-19 case was in Toronto where a man in his 50s returned home from a trip to China with his wife. He was put into isolation in hospital and his wife (who became the second reported case) put herself in self isolation at home. Both people recovered from the virus. Meanwhile, the virus also took hold in British Columbia, with a number of cases emerging and, in one instance, taking the lives of four people at a North Vancouver seniors’ facility. By mid-March, the coronavirus gained momentum, forcing every province to ban all public gatherings, close their schools, shut down restaurants and bars, and asking every Canadian travelling outside of the country to get home and self-quarantine for two weeks.

The hard facts

Here are the hard facts on COVID-19 as of spring 2020:

- By early March, COVID-19 graduated from a widespread epidemic (spreading quickly and across borders) into a pandemic (out of control spreading around the world).
• In Canada, over 60,000 confirmed cases
• Globally, over 3.5 million confirmed cases
• In Canada, over 4,100 deaths
• Globally, over 250,000 deaths
• The hardest hit countries have been:
  ○ U.S.: 71,079 deaths
  ○ United Kingdom: 29,501 deaths
  ○ Italy: 29,315 deaths
  ○ Spain: 25,613 deaths

• The mortality rate for COVID-19 is believed to be two to four per cent. Put another way: 96 to 98 per cent of people who get the virus will survive. The virus is more likely to kill a person the more advanced they are in age, particularly if people are already in a vulnerable health situation.

Daily headlines
For the bulk of early 2020, COVID-19 was a daily headline as news of the spread of the virus captured the attention of the world. Eventually it completely took over the news cycle as China quarantined large areas around Wuhan and Italian authorities quarantined the entire country. The news surrounding COVID-19 also caused global stock markets to take a beating. Things got worse when U.S. President Donald Trump, in an unprecedented move, announced a ban on travel from Europe. The Canadian government followed suit by
advising against all international travel and restricting incoming flights to Canada to a few select airports. While provinces closed their schools to thwart the virus, the Canadian government urged all citizens travelling abroad to return home. Eventually the nation went into a complete lockdown with social distancing and social isolation entering the lexicon of the Canadian vocabulary and fear of COVID-19 dominating the national consciousness.

**Health advice**
While the world was held in the grips of COVID-19, health professionals called for vigilant calm. They advised that standard practices like washing your hands, using hand sanitizer, sneezing into your sleeve and avoiding touching your face are all ways of preventing the spread of viruses and diseases. They encouraged social distancing — staying away from people (particularly if they are sick). They also told travellers to self-quarantine for two weeks upon returning from their trips. They told people to see their family doctor and/or contact their public health authority rather than head straight to their local emergency department if they were worried they were sick. Overall, the health care community urged Canadians not to panic in the face of this new virus but to take it very
seriously. Meanwhile, everything involving large crowds seemed to be cancelled, from NHL games to public skating at the local rink. By late March 2020, it appeared Canada was bracing itself in the battle against this new coronavirus.

**To consider**

1. In mid-March 2020, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau put himself in isolation after his wife Sophie had contracted COVID-19. The same day, the province of Ontario closed schools for the two weeks following their spring break. Eventually the province declared a state of emergency, as did Quebec, B.C. and Alberta. Also, in March the NBA and NHL suspended their seasons. Why do you think these steps were taken?

ACTIVITY #1: Canada’s Response to COVID-19 and Other Diseases

Part A – Canada and COVID-19

Your task is to assess the Canadian response to COVID-19.

- Form a group of four (4) and select one of the areas of discussion below. Clear your topic with your teacher to avoid duplication.
  - About COVID-19
  - Symptoms and treatment
  - Prevention and risks
  - Travel restrictions and exemptions
  - Canada’s response
  - Being prepared


**Note:** Use the information found under the heading **“Coronavirus disease questions answered”** – on the lower half of the page.

- Prepare a 5 to 10-minute multimedia presentation on Canada’s response to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19).
- Present your findings to the class.
Part B – Canada and other diseases

Your task is to assess the Canadian response to infectious diseases. You will complete this part of the activity on your own.

- Select a disease from the list provided by Health Canada.
- Write a 100-200 word analysis of the nature of the disease and how Canada is responding to the health risk posed by the illness.
ACTIVITY #2: A Deeper Dive into the Etymology of COVID-19

When a mystery virus emerged from China in late 2019, health experts at the World Health Organization (WHO) called it a novel coronavirus. It was novel or new because the world had never seen a strain of coronavirus like this in humans. By January, the media was calling it coronavirus, which was a bit misleading since there is no single coronavirus. It is better to use the word coronavirus in relation to the family of viruses that make up this particular grouping of respiratory illnesses. For this reason, in early February 2020, the director-general of the WHO announced a name for the coronavirus and the disease it causes emerging from China: COVID-19. The name was designed to create an overall description of the ailment.

Here’s a breakdown of what the name means:

- **CO** and **VI** – stands for corona-virus.
- **D** – stands for the disease that is caused by the virus.
- **19** – stands for the year that the virus emerged.

*NOTE: Etymology refers to the origin of a word.*
If you look deeper into COVID-19’s etymology, you discover that the novel coronavirus itself actually has a name: SARS-CoV-2. The WHO opted not to include the use of the acronym SARS (which stands for Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome) when speaking publicly about the novel coronavirus because they were worried that people would think that the SARS virus of 2003 had returned to spread around the globe. Though the experts know that COVID-19 starts with a new form of SARS coronavirus that can lead to coronavirus disease, the WHO wanted to keep things simple for the general public.

**Followup**

In March 2020, Dr. Samira Mubareka and Dr. Rob Kozak of Sunnybrook Hospital and the University of Toronto, along with Dr. Arinjay Banerjee and Dr. Karen Mossman of McMaster University, made a major breakthrough in the fight against COVID-19. The researchers were able to isolate the coronavirus SARS-CoV-2 that causes the disease COVID-19. Their efforts meant that scientists around the world could begin studying the virus without having to ship live virus across borders. The research should eventually lead to a vaccine to help prevent COVID-19.
Conduct further inquiries into the breakthrough at Sunnybrook Hospital and write a letter to the researchers thanking them for their quick response to the COVID-19 threat. Refer specifically to how their efforts will help in the fight against COVID-19.
SOURCES


1. **TRUE.** The novel coronavirus that causes the disease known as COVID-19 originated in Wuhan, China.

2. **TRUE.** A pandemic happens when a virus or disease is spreading and can no longer be contained, moving progressively through a community.

3. **FALSE.** Experts believe that epidemics are more likely to grow in democratic societies like Canada.

4. COVID-19 emerged from a live market in China. The likely animal that the virus came from is a:
   - d. Pangolin

5. According to the medical journal “The Lancet,” China had around ________ cases of COVID-19 by the end of January 2020:
   - c. 75 000
5. **FALSE.** According to Dr. Bonnie Henry, the B.C. Provincial Health Officer, COVID-19 lives for a very long time outside the body so people should wear gloves all the time.

6. **FALSE.** According to the most up-to-date information, 23 million people were quarantined in China while 2.8 million were diagnosed with COVID-19, killing 112 000 people.

7. **TRUE.** According to Dr. Isaac Bogoch of the University Health Network, impeccable hand hygiene is one of the keys to controlling the spread of COVID-19.