

# The benefits of being with People

Important news and updates for plan members

## Coronavirus disease COVID-19 outbreak

The name COVID-19 is an abbreviated version of Coronavirus disease 2019. It was first identified in Wuhan, Hubei province, China in December last year. Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses that can cause illnesses like colds and other respiratory tract infections but some, like SARS and the most recently identified COVID-19, can be extremely dangerous.

### How the COVID-19 virus is spread

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), the COVID-19 virus is spread mostly through person-to-person contact mainly through respiratory droplets when those who are infected sneeze, cough, or exhale. From within a one meter range of an infected person, others can breathe in these droplets. If the droplets land on objects and surfaces, people can catch the COVID-19 virus by touching these objects or surfaces, and then touching their eyes, nose, or mouth.

According to the WHO, the virus can be transmitted as soon as those who are infected show flu-like symptoms. There are still uncertainties as to whether mild or asymptomatic cases can transmit the virus. Consistent with most respiratory viruses, people are thought to be most contagious when they are most symptomatic, or to put it simply, the sickest.

### Current state in Canada

The Public Health Agency of Canada has assessed the public health risk associated with COVID-19 as low for Canada. As of March 9, Canada has had a total of 77 confirmed cases.

By location:

- 34 in Ontario
- 32 in British Columbia
- 4 in Quebec
- 7 in Alberta

For current stats on confirmed cases in Canada, visit the [Government of Canada](#) site.

### Travelling outside of Canada

To date, the Government of Canada hasn't implemented a travel ban as a result of the COVID-19 virus but does recommend that all travellers [register](#) with the government so they can be provided with updates if issues arise. The following advisories have been issued:

| Destination                  | Travel warning | Instructions                   |
|------------------------------|----------------|--------------------------------|
| China                        | Level 3        | Avoid all non-essential travel |
| <b>Hubei province, China</b> |                | <b>Avoid all travel</b>        |
| Hong Kong                    | Level 1        | Practise usual precautions     |
| Iran                         | Level 3        | Avoid all non-essential travel |
| Japan                        | Level 2        | Practise special precautions   |
| Northern Italy               | Level 3        | Avoid all non-essential travel |
| Singapore                    | Level 1        | Practise usual precautions     |
| South Korea                  | Level 2        | Practise special precautions   |

Travellers should review safety tips posted on the Government of Canada's [Travel and Tourism](#) site.

**Travel coverage under your group benefits plan**

If you're travelling, it's important to review your plan member booklet to:

1. See if your plan includes travel coverage and if it does,
2. Review the information on the emergency travel coverage and trip cancellation/interruption coverage provided under your group benefits plan.

In some cases, travelling to a destination that has a travel advisory can impact your travel insurance coverage. Trips booked to a destination after an advisory has been announced may not be eligible for medical emergency coverage or trip cancellation/trip interruption coverage.

If you have any questions or concerns, we recommend that you contact your emergency medical travel provider. Contact information can be found on your benefits card or on your travel card.

**For more information**

If you have questions, please contact your benefits plan administrator.

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