

January 4, 2021

**COVID-19  
BULLETIN #303**

Several cases of the new COVID-19 variant have now been identified in Canada and the federal government has posted a travel ban on all flights arriving from the United Kingdom until Jan. 6.

With the increase in cases of the new COVID-19 variant in Canada, Manitoba public health officials are reminding all international travellers to be tested for COVID-19 immediately upon arrival in Manitoba, regardless of if they are displaying symptoms and whether they are visiting the province or are returning from out of the country.

Travellers should self-isolate immediately upon arrival back to the province. They should make an appointment with a provincial testing site or visit a drive-thru test site, and indicate at the time of testing that they have been out of the country and share the location of travel. They should also be tested again after seven days, even if still asymptomatic.

International travellers need to observe the full 14-day self-isolation period regardless of symptoms and test results. Re-testing is advised if an asymptomatic individual develops symptoms at any point, unless the individual had already tested positive.

Individuals who test positive for COVID-19 and have had close contact to an international traveller should identify this contact to public health during the public health investigation and followup.

The Government of Canada has a monitoring program in place with the provinces and territories to identify new COVID-19 variants in Canada, such as the ones identified in the United Kingdom and South Africa.

Cases of the new COVID-19 variant are investigated and managed clinically like other COVID-19 variants. Testing for the variant takes additional time and will not be known at the time COVID-19 test results are available. Additional followup of contacts may occur if the new variant is detected to ensure further transmission is limited as much as possible.

At this time, while early data suggests the new variant may be more transmissible, there is no evidence the variant causes more severe symptoms of COVID-19 or affects vaccine effectiveness.

Manitoba public health officials strongly advises that travel out of the province should be limited to essential purposes only.

The online COVID-19 self-assessment tool can be found at <https://sharedhealthmb.ca/covid19/screening-tool/> and COVID-19 symptoms can be found at <https://manitoba.ca/covid19/fundamentals/symptoms.html>.

For up-to-date information on COVID-19 in Manitoba, visit [www.manitoba.ca/COVID19](http://www.manitoba.ca/COVID19).

For up-to-date information on the #RestartMB Pandemic Response System, visit: <https://manitoba.ca/covid19/restartmb/prs/index.html>.

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For more information:

- Public information, contact Manitoba Government Inquiry: 1-866-626-4862 or 204-945-3744.
- Media requests for general information, contact Communications Services Manitoba: 204-945-3765.

- Media requests for ministerial comment, contact Communications and Stakeholder Relations: 204-945-4916.