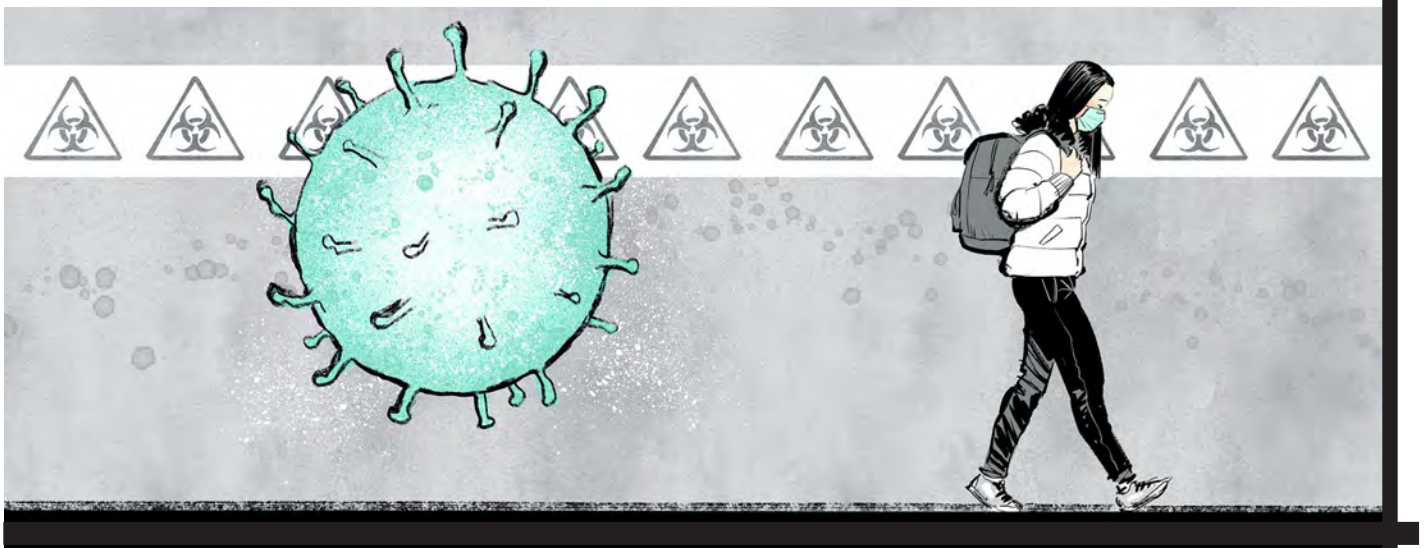




INTERNATIONAL COVID-19

– ALARMING VIRUS IS MAKING ITS WAY AROUND THE GLOBE



The adventure of a lifetime! No doubt that’s what Quebecers Diane and Bernard Menard hoped for when they boarded the *Diamond Princess* cruise ship on January 20. The 3700 passengers and crew were departing from Yokohama, Japan. They were embarking on a 14-day ocean voyage to China, Vietnam, and Taiwan.

The Menards’ dream trip would soon turn into a nightmare. On January 25, an 80-year-old passenger was whisked off the boat when it arrived in Hong Kong. At a hospital she was diagnosed with COVID-19. It’s a potentially dangerous – and highly contagious – strain of a family of diseases called coronaviruses.

A BAD COLD – OR MUCH WORSE?

Coronaviruses cause diseases in birds and mammals. They can also cause common colds in humans. The viruses primarily spread when infected people cough or sneeze. Germs can live on surfaces for up to nine days.

Some exposed people never show symptoms. Others develop fever, cough, and shortness of breath in two to 14 days. Often, COVID-19 is no worse than a bad cold. But for those with heart and lung issues or weak immune systems, it can turn into pneumonia or bronchitis and prove fatal. Elderly people are especially vulnerable.

QUARANTINED!

Fearing the spread of COVID-19 throughout the ship, the crew sailed the *Diamond Princess*

A CLASS OF KILLER DISEASES

Science has identified hundreds of coronaviruses, but only seven so far have mutated to infect humans – and just two have resulted in outbreaks. The first was Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS), which began in China in 2002. It infected nearly 8100 people worldwide and caused 774 deaths. Canada was the hardest-hit country outside of China, with 44 people dying of the illness before it was contained in July 2003.

The second serious outbreak was Middle East Respiratory Syndrome, or MERS. It started in Saudi Arabia in 2012 but didn’t escalate until 2014. It was a **virulent** version of the strain. By the time it was controlled in 2015, it had infected 1329 people, killing nearly half of them.

DEFINITIONS

VIRULENT: extremely dangerous and deadly



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back to Japan. Health officials then **quarantined** all passengers. They were confined to their cabins for 14 days.

Still, by mid-February, 454 passengers developed the bug, including 15 Canadians. The Menards, both 75 years old, were among them. The sick received medical treatment. The 131 Canadians on the ship who tested negative returned to Canada on February 21. Once home, they were quarantined on military bases for 14 more days.

A FAST-MOVING VIRUS

The world first learned of COVID-19 in December, after some pneumonia cases appeared in the Chinese city of Wuhan, home to 11 million people.

Ground zero was likely a seafood market. On that site, some merchants illegally sell marmots, birds, rabbits, bats, snakes, and other creatures. Experts believe that the virus jumped from infected wildlife to humans, then began spreading from person to person.

THE CHINESE RESPONSE

China took massive measures to try to contain the outbreak. It suspended all travel in many regions. Outdoor activities were banned. Tens of millions

of citizens were quarantined in their homes. In late January, a 1000-bed hospital was built in just six days to treat cases.

News of the outbreak coincided with China's huge Lunar New Year travel season. The holiday was extended to discourage people from passing on the bug through travel.

A "PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY"

Yet the disease still spread. On January 30, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared COVID-19 a "public health emergency of international concern." It called for global action to contain the outbreak. WHO's director, Dr. Tedros Gebreyesus, said countries with weak health systems were most at risk. The reason? They don't have the resources to treat large numbers of sick people.

UNCERTAIN OUTCOME

By late February, over 79,000 people worldwide had developed COVID-19. More than 2600 had died. The vast majority were in China. However, there were 500 cases elsewhere. Canada had 11 cases but no fatalities.

There was some good news: the number of new cases in China appeared to be dropping. But

SHOULD YOU WORRY?

There is no vaccine yet to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Still, your chances of catching the virus are very low.

Why? Because Canada has been acting to prevent COVID-19 from taking hold here. Hospitals were alerted to look out for possible cases. And officials brought in airport screening procedures in Vancouver, Montreal, and Toronto. As well, people suspected of having the disease have been quarantined.

There are measures you can take, too. Wash your hands thoroughly, avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth, and avoid people with flu symptoms.

new instances were reported in Italy, Iran, and South Korea. Disturbingly, the victims couldn't be linked to China or other confirmed cases.

Dr. Gebreyesus urged countries to keep working to contain the virus. But he said they must also prepare for the possibility that it will become widespread.

"It's in our hands now," he said. "If we do well within the narrowing window of opportunity... we can **avert** any serious crisis." ★

DEFINITIONS

AVERT: to prevent something bad or harmful from happening

QUARANTINE: to keep a person or animal away from others to stop a disease from spreading



ON THE LINES

Answer the following in complete sentences:

1. Explain what a **coronavirus** is.

2. How many coronaviruses have been identified? How many of these have impacted humans?

3. Explain how a coronavirus usually spreads from person to person.

4. Which new coronavirus appeared in China in early December? Where was it first discovered?

5. Explain how this virus affects humans.

6. Describe the measures that China adopted to try and control the outbreak.

7. What did the World Health Organization declare on January 30?

8. How many people had been infected by COVID-19 by late February? How many people had died?



Directions: Respond to the infographic below. What information conveyed in the infographic is new to you? What is interesting to you? What seems to be especially significant? Why? Overall, how does the information in this infographic enhance your understanding of the coronavirus outbreak? Explain.

Key facts about the coronavirus

The new coronavirus first identified in the Chinese city of Wuhan belongs to a family of viruses that includes the common cold and more serious illnesses such as SARS (severe acute respiratory syndrome). The disease caused by the new virus has been named Covid-19*



 <p>Symptoms Include fever, cough and breathing difficulties. About 82 percent of cases are mild, similar to common cold. Some 15 percent of cases are severe and three percent are critical, according to Chinese data shared with WHO</p>	 <p>Prevention WHO recommends that people wash hands frequently, cover their mouth and nose when sneezing or coughing, and avoid close contact with those who are sick. WHO hopes to have vaccine in 18 months</p>
 <p>Transmission Through droplets when infected person coughs or sneezes, or via contaminated surfaces such as door handles. Incubation period believed to be up to 14 days. People may be able to infect others before symptoms appear</p>	 <p>Global spread About 99 percent of infections are in mainland China, and almost 96 percent of deaths have been in Hubei province and its capital Wuhan, where virus emerged in late 2019. At least 25 other countries have confirmed cases</p>
 <p>People at risk About two percent of people infected with virus have died. Disease can pose particular risk to elderly people and those with pre-existing medical conditions. People over 80 years of age have highest death rates</p>	 <p>Source of virus Believed to be food market in Wuhan that was illegally selling wild animals. Scientists think it may have originated in bats and passed to humans via intermediate species – possibly pangolins – although finding is not confirmed</p>

*Name is shortened version of coronavirus disease 2019
Source: Reuters Pictures: AP, CDC, Flickr / Tina Franklin, Getty Images © GRAPHIC NEWS



QUIZ

A. Write the letter that corresponds to the best answer on the line beside each question:

_____ 1. In which Chinese city was COVID-19 first discovered?

- a) Beijing
- b) Hong Kong
- c) Shanghai
- d) Wuhan

_____ 2. Which city did the *Diamond Princess* dock at?

- a) Tokyo
- b) San Francisco
- c) Manila
- d) Yokohama

_____ 3. Where do health authorities suspect COVID-19 was first transmitted to humans?

- a) at a hospital
- b) at an airport
- c) at a seafood market
- d) at a sports stadium

B. Mark the statements T (True) or F (False). If a statement is True, write one important fact to support it on the line below. If a statement is False, write the words that make it true on the line below.

_____ 4. **True or False?** Coronaviruses are primarily spread by infected people who cough and sneeze.

_____ 5. **True or False?** Everyone infected by COVID-19 shows flu-like symptoms.

_____ 6. **True or False?** The Lunar New Year holiday in China was extended to slow the spread of COVID-19.

C. Fill in the blanks to complete each sentence.

7. Passengers and crew on the *Diamond Princess* were _____ for 14 days.

8. China built a hospital in Wuhan in _____ days.

9. WHO = World _____ Organization.

D. Respond to the following question in paragraph form. *(Use a separate sheet of paper if necessary.)*

As you see it, what is the significance of the COVID-19 outbreak? Give reasons to explain your answer.
