

## HERE ARE 10 THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT CORONAVIRUS

Halton Healthcare infectious disease specialist, Dr. Neil Rau, gave Georgetown's The Independent some valuable information on the notorious coronavirus and how Georgetown Hospital manages potential outbreaks.

- 1. First of all, Halton Healthcare has no suspected or confirmed cases of 2019-nCoV at this time, reported Rau.
- 2. Halton Healthcare's Infection Prevention & Control program, screening processes and hospital design have improved significantly since SARS (2003 outbreak of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome), so hospitals are much better prepared to respond immediately through improved diagnostics, surveillance measures and communications, which help prevent the spread of infection and identify it quickly.
- 3. Halton Healthcare is following the Ministry of Health's direction for screening for suspected cases of novel coronavirus.

- 4. In addition to coronavirus surveillance questions, all patients who arrive at the emergency department are screened for a new cough, shortness of breath and/or fever, asked a thorough travel history and asked if they have received health care inside or outside of Canada.
- **5.** In the event someone comes to emergency exhibiting signs of a fever and acute respiratory illness or pneumonia and has either travelled to the province of Hubei, China (including Wuhan) in the 14 days before onset of illness, has been in close contact with a confirmed or probable case of the virus, or has been in close contact with a person with acute respiratory illness who has been to Hubei within 14 days prior to their illness onset, they will immediately be isolated and managed in a negative pressure isolation room "airborne-dropletcontact precautions." Dr. Rau's team would be consulted regarding the need

for testing for 2019-nCoV in collaboration with Halton Region public health.

- 6. These patients will then be managed in a negative pressure isolation room with "airborne-droplet-contact precautions." Dr. Rau's team would be consulted regarding the need for testing for 2019-nCoV in collaboration with Halton Region public health.7.) Emergency departments always have signage with screening questions regarding all seasonal illness and travel-related infections.
- 8. Halton Healthcare has robust processes in place for any infection control emergency involving a novel organism.
- 9. Although medical professionals are still learning about this coronavirus, from what is known so far. the infection that it causes does not appear to be as severe as the SARS virus and all imported cases are mild.
- 10. Halton Healthcare hospitals are safe for patients, visitors and staff and are operating as usual.

## **SOBEYS ELIMINATES PLASTIC BAGS FROM HALTON STORES**

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A major grocery store chain is saying goodbye to plastic bags.

As of Friday (Jan. 31), all Sobeys grocery stores - including those in Burlington, Milton, Oakville and Halton Hills - no longer offer plastic grocery bags for shoppers at checkout.

They encourage people to bring their own reusable bags. Those who forget to bring one when shopping can purchase reusable bags at the store. Paper bags will also be available.

According to the company, the initiative - first announced in July of last year - will help remove 225 million plastic grocery bags, which mostly end up in landfills, out of circulation every year.

"It's an insane number," said Laura Newtown, owner of a sustainable gift store, The Kind Matter, in Milton and a soon-to-be-opened branch in Oakville, who calls removing plastic bags from stores "a great move."

"When people get to hear the number, I think it will help open their eyes and become more aware what all these convenience items are creating every day... just how much waste we're unknowingly creating."

Newtown says such changes might be hard for some people initially, but "that little bit of discomfort will make people seek out a better alternative."

"Once people get used to it, then we'll look back and think: 'Oh my gosh, why did we need those for so many years?' " she said.

Sobeys states in a press release that it plans to quickly phase out plastic bags and introduce paper replacements across its brands, including Safeway, FreshCo, Foodland and others.