



WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION

NOTE FOR THE PRESS

WEBSITE

1211 GENEVA 27 SWITZERLAND - TELEPHONE: 791.21.11 - CABLES: UNISANTE-GENEVE - TELEX: 415.416 - FAX: 791.07.46 - E-MAIL: inf@who.int

Note for the Press N°9
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WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION LIFTS TORONTO TRAVEL ADVISORY, MAINTAINS ADVICE FOR AREAS OF CHINA

Effective today, the World Health Organization (WHO) is lifting the travel advisory for Toronto, Canada. The advisory recommended considering postponing non-essential travel to Toronto, and was issued as a precautionary measure one week ago in order to minimize the international spread of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS). WHO is lifting this advisory as the situation in Toronto has now improved.

Travel advisories are issued following consideration of several factors, including the magnitude of probable SARS cases, the last dates of cases of community transmission, and the last dates of export of cases.

In Toronto, the magnitude of probable SARS cases has decreased; twenty days have now passed since the last cases of community transmission; and, no new confirmed exportation of cases has occurred.

"We are lifting the travel advice for Toronto, Canada, effective Wednesday, 30 April," stated Dr Gro Harlem Brundtland, Director-General of the WHO. "However, due to continued recent transmission in the hospital setting, Toronto still has an outbreak of SARS, and the lifting of this travel advice does not change Toronto's status as an "affected" area.

The WHO issued exit screening advice for SARS-affected areas on 27 March. The WHO welcomes the report from Canadian officials that exit screening for SARS will be improved.

"To minimize the risk of the export of SARS, we ask that all affected areas implement the recommended pro-active screening measures – by interviewing passengers at the airport check-in," said Dr Brundtland.

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The WHO has also reviewed the travel advisories for areas of China, including Beijing, Guangdong province, Shanxi province and Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. The WHO advisories to consider postponing non-essential travel to these areas, remain in place.

The WHO reviews travel advisories regularly.

For further information contact: Dick Thompson; communications officer; Communicable Diseases Section; World Health Organization; Telephone +41 22 791 2684; mobile: +41 79 475 5475, e-mail Thompsond@who.int, or Maria Cheng, Communicable Diseases Section; World Health Organization; Telephone +41 22 791 3982, e-mail chengm@who.int.
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