
How to protect yourself

Coronaviruses are spread mainly from person to person through close contact, for example, in a household, workplace or health care centre.

There is no vaccine available to protect against the 2019 novel coronavirus, but there are actions you can take to help prevent the spread of germs that cause respiratory illnesses.

Everyday actions

Take these everyday steps to reduce exposure to the virus and protect your health:

- wash your hands often with soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizer
- sneeze and cough into your sleeve
- avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth
- avoid contact with people who are sick
- stay home if you are sick

[Poster: What you need to know to help you and your family stay healthy](#)

Social distancing

Everyone in Ontario should be practicing social distancing to reduce their exposure to other people.

Everyone in Ontario should do their best to avoid close contact with people outside of their immediate families. Close contact includes being within two (2) meters of another person.

If you believe you have been exposed to someone with COVID-19 symptoms, you should begin to [self-monitor](#) for a period of 14 days. This means that, in addition to social distancing, you should track how you feel. You should take your temperature daily and log any other symptoms that develop (for example, sore throat, new cough). You can share these records with your primary care provider over the phone if you seek assessment services.

How to self-isolate

Self-isolating means staying at home and avoiding contact with other people to help prevent the spread of disease to others in your home and your community.

All persons over 70 years of age and individuals who are immunocompromised are advised to self-isolate for a period of 14 days. This means that you should only leave your home or see other people for essential reasons. Where possible, you should seek services over the phone or internet or ask for help from friends, family or neighbours with essential errands.

When self-isolating you should:

Stay home

- do not use public transportation, taxis or rideshares
- do not go to work, school or other public places
- your health care provider will tell you when it is safe to leave

Limit the number of visitors in your home

- only have visitors who you must see and keep the visits short
- keep away from seniors and people with chronic medical conditions (for example, diabetes, lung problems, immune deficiency)

Avoid contact with others

- stay in a separate room away from other people in your home as much as possible and use a separate bathroom if you have one
- make sure that shared rooms have good airflow (for example, open windows)

Keep distance

- if you are in a room with other people, keep a distance of at least two metres and wear a mask that covers your nose and mouth
- if you cannot wear a mask, people should wear a mask when they are in the same room as you

Cover your coughs and sneezes

- cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze
- cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve or elbow, not your hand
- throw used tissues in a lined waste basket, and wash your hands. Lining the wastebasket with a plastic bag makes waste disposal easier and safer.
- after emptying the wastebasket wash your hands

Wash your hands

- wash your hands often with soap and water
- dry your hands with a paper towel, or with your own cloth towel that no one else shares
- use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available

Wear a mask over your nose and mouth

- wear a mask if you must leave your house to see a health care provider
- wear a mask when you are within two metres of other people

Poster: [How to self-isolate.](#)

How to care for someone with COVID-19

Wash your hands often

- wash your hands with soap and water after each contact with the infected person
- use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available

Wear mask and gloves

- wear a mask and gloves when you have contact with the person's saliva or other body fluids (for example, blood, sweat, saliva, vomit, urine and feces)

Dispose of gloves and mask after use

- take the gloves and mask off right after you provide care and dispose of them in the wastebasket lined with the plastic bag
- take off the gloves first and clean your hands with soap and water before taking off your mask.
- clean your hands again with soap and water before touching your face or doing anything else

Limit the number of visitors in your home

- only have visitors who you must see and keep the visits short
- keep seniors and people with chronic medical conditions (for example, diabetes, lung problems, and immune deficiency) away from the infected person

Avoid sharing household items

- do not share dishes, drinking glasses, cups, eating utensils, towels, bedding or other items with the person under investigation
- after use, these items should be washed with soap or detergent in warm water. No special soap is needed
- dishwashers and washing machines can be used
- do not share cigarettes

Clean

- clean your home with regular household cleaners
- clean regularly touched items such as toilets, sink tap handles, doorknobs and bedside tables on a daily basis

Wash laundry thoroughly

- there is no need to separate the laundry, but you should wear gloves when handling
- clean your hands with soap and water immediately after removing your gloves

Be careful when touching waste

- all waste can go into regular garbage bins
- when emptying wastebaskets, take care to not touch used tissues with your hands. Lining the wastebasket with a plastic bag makes waste disposal easier and safer.
- clean your hands with soap and water after emptying the wastebasket