

## What you need to know about COVID-19

### COVID-19

**COVID-19** stands for **Corona Virus Disease – 2019** (year the outbreak began). COVID-19 spreads through direct contact with the respiratory droplets of someone who is infected with the virus through coughing, sneezing or talking. These droplets can spread up to two metres/six feet. It may also be possible for a person to get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose, or eyes.

### Symptoms

Some people may experience mild or no physical symptoms. Symptoms can take up to 14 days after exposure to COVID-19 to appear, and include:

- Fever
- Cough
- Difficulty breathing
- Sore throat
- Runny nose
- Loss of taste or smell
- Nausea, vomiting, diarrhea
- Difficulty swallowing

If you are having difficulty breathing, call 911.

Disease symptoms may be different, depending on age. Children and older adults with COVID-19, may also have non-specific symptoms, such as:

- disorientation, confusion
- sleeping more than usual or muscle aches
- dizziness, weakness or falls
- chills, headaches

Rarely, children can get an inflammatory condition that impacts the blood vessels, called vasculitis. It can present with prolonged fever, abdominal pain, red eyes, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, and rash. It needs medical attention.

For others, there is a higher risk for severe illness, including people over the age of 60, and those with weakened immunity or underlying health conditions.

### Prevention

At this time, there are no specific vaccines or treatments for COVID-19. Reduce your risk of exposure by practising these protective measures:

- Limit non-essential trips out of your home.
- Keep two metres/six feet distance from others, or wear a mask or face covering.
- Clean your hands often. Use soap and water or an alcohol-based (70-90%) hand sanitizer.
- Avoid touching your face with unwashed hands.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with your elbow or a tissue. Immediately throw the tissue in the garbage and wash your hands.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Stay home if you are feeling unwell.

## Cloth Mask / Face Covering

A [cloth mask](#) is strongly recommended if you are unable to maintain two metres/six feet distance from others, such as on transit, in an elevator, when shopping, or entering and leaving your apartment building.

## Testing

There is a test for COVID-19. The test tells you if you have the infection right now. The test involves taking a swab from the back of the nose or throat.

You should get tested for COVID-19 if:

- You have one or more symptoms of COVID-19, even if they are mild;
- You were a close contact of someone who has COVID-19;
- You are concerned you may have been exposed to someone who might have COVID-19, even if you do not have symptoms;
- You are at high risk for getting COVID-19 through your work (e.g. health care workers, grocery store or food processing plant employees), even if you do not have symptoms.

To get tested, [find an assessment centre in Toronto](#).

If you have been tested for COVID-19, you can look up your [results](#). If your test was negative, you can stop self-isolating 24 hours after your symptoms have resolved as long as you are not required to be in self-isolation for another reason (such as being a close contact of a case or if you recently returned from travel).

## Treatment

There is no specific treatment for COVID-19. People who have COVID-19 should receive supportive health care to help relieve symptoms. People with more severe illness may require hospitalization.

## Self-isolation

Stay home and [self-isolate](#) for 14 days if you have:

- a positive lab confirmed test for COVID-19
- symptoms of COVID-19
- been exposed to someone with COVID-19 or someone who has symptoms of COVID-19
- returned from travel anywhere outside of Canada in the past 14 days.

Even if you have mild symptoms, you must stay home and self-isolate.

## Beware of Fraud and Scams

Phishing is when a fraudster uses a false pretence to convince you to hand over personal information. Toronto Public Health staff will never ask a person for their credit card or a social insurance number. There are currently no drugs licensed for the treatment or prevention of COVID-19.

## More Information

Visit our website at [toronto.ca/COVID19](https://toronto.ca/COVID19) for updated information or call us at 416-338-7600.