

Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19): Self-Isolation

Public Health - Factsheet

In December 2019, a novel (new) coronavirus (COVID-19) was confirmed in Wuhan, China. The situation continues to evolve, with COVID-19 cases reported in countries outside of China, including Canada and the United States.

You may have been exposed to COVID-19 through direct contact with an ill person or in your recent travels. **You are therefore being asked to self-isolate and monitor yourself for symptoms for up to 14 days.**

What does self-isolation mean?

Self-isolation means avoiding situations where you could infect other people. This can help prevent the spread of infections. DO NOT attend activities or gatherings where you may come in close contact with other people. This includes work, school and university, public transport (plane/bus/taxi/carpool), health-care facilities, faith-based facilities (church), grocery stores or restaurants, shopping malls, sporting events, concerts and birthday parties.

You should limit contact with people other than family members or individuals you travelled with. If you are in a home where other people have not been exposed, minimize close contact with the other members of your household by avoiding situations where you may have close contact. Ask friends to drop off groceries and supplies, or use a delivery or pick-up service.

Check with Health Links–Info Santé if you have any questions about self-isolation. Also, if you have a service provider that regularly comes into your home to provide necessary care or assistance to yourself or a family member (e.g. home care), they should be notified.

Why am I being asked to self-isolate?

Self-isolation is used to lower the chance of spreading the illness to other people. When you are exposed to an illness, there is the time between exposure and when you start to feel sick. This is called an incubation period. There is a small chance you can spread germs in the days before you feel sick. People at high-risk of having been exposed to the illness are asked to self-isolate.

How do I self-monitor my symptoms?

To self-monitor your symptoms, you should take your temperature twice a day, in the morning and at nighttime, using a digital thermometer by mouth (oral). You should not eat, drink, smoke and/or chew gum 30 minutes before taking your temperature. Do not take acetaminophen (e.g. Tylenol®) or ibuprofen (e.g. Advil®) during the 14-day self-isolation period UNLESS your health care provider advises otherwise. The **Temperature Self-Monitoring** form (www.manitoba.ca/health/coronavirus/docs/temperature.pdf) that you may have received from a public health nurse can help you keep track of and record your temperature, and any other symptoms you may experience during the 14-day self-isolation period.

There are no specific treatments for coronavirus illnesses. Most people with COVID-19 will get better on their own. Some individuals, however, may require medical treatment.

What do I do if I start having symptoms?

If you develop a fever higher than 38.0°C (100.4°F), cough, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing or any other symptoms at any time during the 14-day self-isolation period, call Health Links–Info Santé before going to your local urgent care centre or emergency department, or call 911 if it is an emergency.

When you arrive, you will be given a mask to wear and you will be isolated to lower the chance of spreading the virus to other people.

Should you experience other mild symptoms, such as a sore throat or runny nose, speak with a public health nurse or call Health Links–Info Santé.

You should also avoid contact with pets that live in your home as they could possibly get sick.

A health care provider can diagnose COVID-19 based on your symptoms and laboratory tests.

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What else can I do to stop the spread of COVID-19?

The virus can spread through close contact with an infected person who is coughing or sneezing. You can also get COVID-19 by touching objects contaminated with the virus and then touching your mouth, eyes or nose.

Common prevention measures include regular handwashing with soap and water for at least 15 seconds. Make sure to dry your hands thoroughly. Or, you can use an alcohol-based hand cleanser if your hands are not visibly dirty. It is especially important to clean your hands:

- After coughing or sneezing
- When caring for a sick person
- Before, during or after you prepare food
- Before eating
- After toilet use
- When hands are visibly dirty

You should also cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing and sneezing, or you can cough or sneeze into your sleeve. Throw used tissues in the garbage and immediately wash your hands, or use an alcohol-based hand cleanser.

Avoid sharing household and personal care items (e.g. dishes, towels, pillows, toothbrushes, etc.). After use of these items, wash them thoroughly with soap and warm water, place in the dishwasher for cleaning or, wash in your washing machine.

At this time, there is no vaccine to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

For more information about COVID-19:

Talk to a public health nurse.

For a listing of public health offices, visit: www.manitoba.ca/health/publichealth/offices.html;

Call Health Links–Info Santé in Winnipeg at 204-788-8200; toll free elsewhere in Manitoba 1-888-315-9257;

Or, visit:

Manitoba's coronavirus website: www.manitoba.ca/health/coronavirus/index.html

Canada's coronavirus website: www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection.html