



COVID-19 INFORMATION MEMO 20 March 2020

BASIC RECOMMENDATIONS AND INFORMATION

Protection measures for everyone

You can reduce your chances of being infected or spreading COVID-19 by following some simple practices:

- Social and physical distancing
- Good hygiene
- Do not wear a mask if you are not sick
- Avoid non-essential travel

Social and Physical Distancing

Together, we can slow the spread of COVID-19 by making a conscious effort to keep a physical distance between each other. Social and physical distancing is proven to be one of the most effective ways to reduce the spread of illness during an outbreak. With patience and cooperation, we can all do our part.

This means making changes in your everyday routines to minimize close contact with others, including:

- avoiding non-essential gatherings, even between family and friends
- avoiding common greetings, such as handshakes, hugs and kisses
- avoiding crowded places such as concerts, arenas, conferences and festivals
- limiting contact with people at higher risk like older adults and those in poor health
- avoid crowded places such as malls, places of worship, parks and other public spaces
- keeping a distance of at least 2 arms lengths (approximately 2 metres) from others, as much as possible

Hygiene

Proper hygiene can help reduce the risk of infection or spreading infection to others:

- wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after using the washroom and when preparing food
 - use alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available
- when coughing or sneezing:
 - cough or sneeze into a tissue or the bend of your arm, not your hand
 - dispose of any tissues you have used as soon as possible in a lined waste basket and wash your hands afterwards
- avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands
- clean the following high touch surfaces frequently with regular household cleaners or diluted bleach (1-part bleach to 9 parts water):
 - toys
 - phones



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- electronics
- door handles
- light switches
- bedside tables
- television remotes
- toilets

Wearing masks

If you are a healthy individual, the use of a mask is **not** recommended for preventing the spread of COVID-19.

Wearing a mask when you are not ill may give a false sense of security. There is a potential risk of infection with improper mask use and disposal. They also need to be changed frequently. However, your health care provider may recommend you wear a mask if you are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 while you are seeking or waiting for care. In this instance, masks are an appropriate part of infection prevention and control measures. The mask acts as a barrier and helps stop the tiny droplets from spreading you when you cough or sneeze.

Risks of getting coronavirus

There is an increased risk of more severe outcomes for some people living in Canada:

- aged 65 and over
- with compromised immune systems
- with underlying medical conditions

Currently people living in Canada are advised to avoid all non-essential travel.

In order to mitigate the impacts of COVID-19, **everyone has a role to play**. It takes more than governments and action from the health sector to protect the health and safety of our communities. Each of us can help our country be prepared in the event of an emergency by understanding how COVID-19 spreads and how to protect ourselves and all around us.