



Mackenzie
Health

COVID-19 Toolkit for Families and Caregivers

March 2020



Introduction

The Mackenzie Health COVID-19 Toolkit for Families and Caregivers is a resource to help you and your family in preparing for and responding to the pandemic. The toolkit provides guidance on:

- Preventing COVID-19
- Caring for sick family members
- Staying healthy during a pandemic

More information on our visiting policy and communication alternatives can be found on the Mackenzie Health website at www.mackenziehealth.ca/visitinghours.



Understanding COVID-19

COVID-19 is a new strain of coronavirus not previously identified in humans. Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses that cause a variety of illnesses and up to 30 per cent of the cases of the common cold in adults. COVID-19 may spread from person to person through droplets of saliva or discharge from the nose or mouth of an infected person who coughs or sneezes.

Most people infected with COVID-19 will experience mild to moderate respiratory illness and recover without requiring special treatment. Some of those who are infected may have little to no symptoms.

Symptoms may take up to 14 days to appear after exposure to COVID-19. This is the longest known incubation period for this disease.

Symptoms include:



**Difficulty
Breathing**



Cough



**Fever
> 38.0**



Good Habits to Prevent COVID-19



✓ **Wash your hands frequently**

Regularly and thoroughly clean your hands with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.



✓ **Maintain Social Distancing**

Maintain at least a 2 metre (6 foot) distance between yourself and others.



✓ **Don't touch your eyes, nose or mouth without first washing your hands**

Hands touch many surfaces and can pick up viruses. Once contaminated, hands can transfer the virus to your eyes, nose or mouth. From there, the virus can enter your body and can make you sick.



✓ **Practice respiratory hygiene**

Cover your mouth and nose with your bent elbow or tissue when you cough or sneeze. Dispose of the used tissue immediately and wash or sanitize your hands



✓ **Disinfect items people frequently touch**

Use a household disinfectant or chlorine bleach mixture to regularly clean doorknobs, toys, keyboards, faucets, remote controls, phones and switches.



What Can Caregivers Do?

If you're caring for someone with COVID-19 in your home, here are some helpful tips:

✓ **Physically separate anyone infected with COVID-19 from other people**

If possible, the sick person should stay in a separate room that others do not enter. Other people living in the home should limit contact with the sick person.

✓ **Designate one person as the main caregiver**

ideally, this caregiver should be healthy and not have any high-risk medical conditions that would put him or her at risk for contracting COVID-19

What is considered high-risk:

- Chronic lung disease or moderate to severe asthma
- Serious heart conditions
- Immunocompromised (including cancer treatment)
- People of any age with severe obesity (body mass index [BMI] ≥ 40)
- Certain underlying medical conditions, particularly if not well controlled, such as those with diabetes, renal failure, or liver disease
- Age 65 years and older
- Residing in a nursing home or long-term care facility
- People who are pregnant should be monitored since they are known to be at risk of severe viral illness



Self-Isolation: Guide for caregivers, household members and close contacts

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 (e.g. blood, sweat, vomit, urine and feces).

Dispose of gloves and mask after use

- ✓ Take your gloves and mask off right after you provide care and dispose of them in a waste bin lined with a plastic bag.
- ✓ Take off your gloves 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 (e.g. diabetes, lung problems, and immune deficiency) away from the infected person.



Self-Isolation: Guide for caregivers, household members and close contacts (cont'd)

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.

Clean

- ✓ Clean your home with regular household cleaners.
- ✓ Clean frequently 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 waste bins.
- ✓ When emptying waste bins, take care to not touch used tissues with your hands. Line waste bin with a plastic bag.
- ✓ Clean your hands with soap and water after emptying the wastebasket.



Maintaining a Healthy Mind and Body

Things to remember when trying to understand the COVID-19 pandemic:



- It is normal to worry about yourself and your family's safety
- Everyone is affected by COVID-19 in some capacity
- Grief and anger are normal reactions
- Focusing on your strengths will help you heal
- Everyone has different needs and different ways of coping

Additional Resources

- **When and How to Wear a Mask:**
<https://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/documents/ncov/factsheet/factsheet-covid-19-how-to-wear-mask.pdf?la=en>
- **How to Wash your Hands**
<https://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/documents/ncov/factsheet/factsheet-covid-19-hand-hygiene.pdf?la=en>
- **Government of Canada**
<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/coronavirus-disease-covid-19.html>
- **Government of Ontario**
<http://ontario.ca/coronavirus>