

Care at home for those who have or may have been exposed to COVID-19



You may be caring for a person who has or may have COVID-19. Follow this advice to protect yourself and others in the home, as well as those in your community.

There may be different requirements if you or any of your household members are vaccinated against COVID-19. Follow the instructions from your local public health authority.

Supplies

You'll need:

- a thermometer
- medical masks
- non-medical masks
- tissues and disposable paper towels
- eye protection, like a face shield or goggles
- hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol
- dish soap, hand soap and regular laundry soap

You'll also need:

- household cleaning products
- over-the-counter medication to reduce fever, like:
 - ibuprofen
 - acetaminophen
- alcohol prep wipes or cleaning products made for electronics
- a no-touch waste container with a plastic liner, like a garbage bin
- hard surface disinfectant that has a drug identification number (DIN)
 - if not available, use household bleach (chlorine).

If you can't get these supplies, reach out to family, friends or neighbours. You can also contact your local public health authority or a community organization for advice, support and resources.

Advice for caregivers

Ideally, only one person should provide care to someone who is in quarantine or isolation. If possible, the caregiver should be fully vaccinated and not be at risk of more severe disease or outcomes from COVID-19. This includes older adults or those who have a chronic medical condition. This will help to reduce the risk of COVID-19 spreading to others in the household.

Wear a **medical mask** if the person you're caring for has **tested positive or has symptoms** and is in **isolation**. The person you're caring for should also wear a medical mask when they're:

- › receiving care, either:
 - during close-range interactions or
 - when in direct physical contact with others
- › in a shared indoor space, with or without others, like:
 - kitchens
 - hallways
 - washrooms
- › in a private outdoor space with others, like:
 - a balcony
 - the backyard

If unavailable, you should both properly wear a well-constructed and well-fitting non-medical mask.

Wear a **non-medical mask** if the person you're caring for was potentially **exposed** to COVID-19 and is in **quarantine**. The person you're caring for should also wear a non-medical mask when they're:

- › receiving care, either:
 - during close-range interactions **or**
 - when in direct physical contact with others
- › in a shared indoor space, with or without others, like:
 - kitchens
 - hallways
 - washrooms
- › in a private outdoor space with others, like:
 - a balcony
 - the backyard

Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. You don't have to wear disposable single-use gloves.

Wear eye protection with your mask, not as a replacement. Eye protection includes:

- › face shields
- › safety glasses
- › safety goggles



Protect yourself and others

Physical distancing

Limit the amount of time you spend in a shared space with the person you're caring for. Keep all interactions with the person you're caring for brief and from as far away as possible. Some people may need you to spend more time with them depending on their:

- › age
- › maturity
- › ability to understand and follow prevention measures

Avoid group activities with the person you're caring for, like:

- › sharing meals
- › playing games
- › sitting or cuddling together
- › watching television together

Use a separate room for sleeping from the person you're caring for. If not possible, sleep in separate beds. Position yourselves head-to-toe to keep as far away from one another as possible.

Use a separate washroom from the person you're caring for. If not possible:

- › open the window
- › put the toilet lid down before flushing
- › clean and disinfect surfaces and objects the person you're caring for has touched after each use

Wearing a mask

If the person you're caring for is in isolation, you and other household members should wear a medical mask or a well-constructed and well-fitting non-medical mask when in a:

- › shared indoor space with the person in isolation
- › private outdoor space with the person in isolation

Some household members may be at risk of more severe disease or outcomes from COVID-19. They should wear a medical mask when in a shared indoor or private outdoor space with the person in isolation.

Other personal preventive practices

Avoid sharing personal items with the person you're caring for, like:

- › towels
- › utensils
- › bed linens
- › toothbrushes
- › food and drink
- › electronic devices

Interact with the person you're caring for outside when possible, in a private backyard or on a balcony. Continue to follow physical distancing and relevant mask advice.

Open a window when possible to improve ventilation.

If possible, care for any pets in the home or co-living setting while the person you're caring for is in quarantine or isolation.

Cleaning and disinfecting

We don't know exactly how long the COVID-19 virus lives on different surfaces. Evidence suggests it can live on objects and surfaces from a few hours to days, depending on the type of surface. It's uncertain to what extent contaminated surfaces play a role in the spread of COVID-19.

A cautious approach is recommended when there's an ill person in the home. Frequently clean and disinfect high-touch surfaces and objects, including:

- › toilets
- › phones
- › tablets
- › keyboards
- › doorknobs
- › bedside tables
- › television remotes
- › laundry containers

Use approved hard-surface disinfectants that have a drug identification number (DIN) or a diluted bleach solution to disinfect. Always follow instructions for proper handling of household bleach (chlorine).

Use separate no-touch plastic-lined containers, like a garbage can, for:

- › used medical masks and other contaminated disposable items
- › contaminated laundry, including non-medical masks

Caring for a child

You may be caring for a child who has or may have COVID-19. If so, prevent them from sharing objects with other children in the household, like:

- › toys
- › bottles
- › blankets
- › soothers

The virus that causes COVID-19 has not been found in breastmilk. Given the health benefits to your child, you should continue to breastfeed (if you do already).

Children under the age of 2 should not wear masks. Children between the ages of 2 and 5 may be able to wear a mask if they:

- › are supervised
- › can tolerate it
- › can put it on and take it off

Children older than 5 should wear masks in the same situations or settings as adults.

Monitoring symptoms and seeking medical care

Watch for new or worsening symptoms in:

- › the person you're caring for
- › others in the household
- › yourself

Call 911 or your local emergency number if the person you're caring for develops severe symptoms, such as:

- › significant difficulty breathing
- › chest pain or pressure
- › new onset of confusion
- › difficulty waking up

The person you're caring for may need to leave your home or co-living setting to seek medical care. Make sure you let the ambulance dispatcher and the hospital know the person you're caring for has or may have COVID-19.

If possible, do **not** use public transportation to seek medical care.

Only one healthy person should drive the ill person. The ill person should sit in the back seat of the vehicle, as far away as possible from the driver. Keep all vehicle windows fully open if possible and safe to do so.

Make sure all passengers are wearing a medical mask. If they aren't available, wear well-constructed and well-fitting non-medical masks instead.

If the ill person is breathing well, they should also wear a mask.

Your quarantine period

You may need to quarantine and monitor yourself for symptoms:

- › after your last day of exposure to the person in isolation and
- › according to your local public health authority's advice
 - inform your local public health authority if you or any of your household members have been vaccinated against COVID-19

There may be different quarantine requirements if you or any of your household members are vaccinated against COVID-19. Follow the instructions from your local public health authority.

If you start to develop symptoms:

- › isolate yourself away from others immediately
- › put on a medical mask
 - if unavailable, wear a non-medical mask that's well constructed and well fitting
- › contact your local public health authority or health care provider for further instructions