How to Protect Yourself from COVID-19

This fact sheet outlines prevention measures you can use to reduce the spread of COVID-19. Vaccination is one of the strongest layers of prevention. Combine it with other layers of prevention to lower your risk.

Ways COVID-19 is spread

- COVID-19 is spread most commonly during close contact (generally less than 2 metres) through an infected person’s respiratory particles generated when a person breathes, coughs, sneezes, talks, or sings.
- These particles range in size from large ones which fall quickly to the ground to smaller ones, known as aerosols, which can remain suspended in the air.
- Aerosols may transmit over long distances, but the risk is higher with longer periods of time in indoor spaces with poor ventilation and lack of masking or distancing.
- Objects or surfaces (e.g., furniture, fixtures, and gadgets) that have the COVID-19 virus on them may transmit the virus to your hands then to your eyes, nose and mouth.

Layers of protection against COVID-19

Use multiple layers of prevention to provide the best protection, especially if you cannot avoid closed spaces, crowded places, and close contact. No single intervention on its own is perfect at preventing COVID-19 spread and protection from each method is complimentary and additive.

Get vaccinated

- Get fully vaccinated for COVID-19, plus a booster if you are eligible. Being vaccinated helps to protect you from severe disease and hospitalization due to COVID-19.
- The more people who are vaccinated, the less COVID-19 will circulate in the community.
- For more information visit Ministry of Health website: How to Book a COVID-19 Vaccine Appointment.

Stay home when sick and what to do when exposed

- Stay home when you are sick. You may be requested to get tested. See Public Health Ontario’s How to Self-Isolate.
- You may be advised by public health to stay home if you have been exposed to someone with COVID-19. People can be infectious before they are sick.

Practice physical distancing and avoid crowded spaces

- Two metres distancing or further helps to prevent transmission, especially when indoors or unmasked.

Spend time outdoors or in well-ventilated indoor spaces

- Even when outdoors, physical distancing helps to prevent transmission.
- Ensure your ventilation system is in good working order. If you don’t have a ventilation system, open windows to increase fresh air flow. You can also run your bathroom or kitchen exhaust fans longer or often.

Wear a well-fitting mask in public

- Consider wearing a well-fitting mask, especially in shared indoor spaces. See Public Health Ontario’s Optimizing the Use of Masks Against COVID-19.

Practice respiratory etiquette and keep things clean

- Wash your hands frequently.
- Cover your coughs and sneezes.
- Clean high-touch surfaces regularly.

The information in this document is current as of April 7, 2022.

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