

Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

How to Protect Yourself from COVID-19

Older Adults and People with Chronic Medical Conditions or Weakened Immune Systems

Who is at increased risk?

Based on what we know so far, people of any age or health status can develop COVID-19, but three groups are at higher risk for hospitalization or death:

- **Adults in their 60's and over**, who account for most of the reported COVID-19 hospitalizations, intensive care unit (ICU) stays, and deaths in Canada.
- **People of any age with chronic medical conditions**, including: Lung disease, heart disease, high blood pressure, diabetes, kidney disease, liver disease, cerebrovascular disease (e.g., past stroke).
- **People of any age who are immunocompromised**, including those:
 - With an underlying medical condition (e.g., cancer)
 - Taking immune weakening medications (e.g., chemotherapy)

Stay home and practice physical distancing

- Staying home and [physical distancing](#) are the best ways for people at increased risk for severe COVID-19 to protect themselves. The [Ministry of Health](#) strongly recommends that adults aged 70 years and older, people who have underlying medical conditions, and people who are immunocompromised stay at home.
- Limit those with whom you have close physical contact (closer than 2 metres or 6 feet) to household members, intimate partners and essential caregivers.
 - If you live with people who continue to work outside the home try to maintain physical distancing (more than 2 metres or 6 feet).
 - Avoid visitors, unless essential (e.g., care providers), and they should wear a mask and wash their hands often when they visit you.
 - Stay away from anyone who is sick or may have been exposed to COVID-19. These individuals should [self-isolate](#) away from you.
- If a virtual appointment with your health care provider is not possible, avoid public transportation and rideshares. Ask about driving services for medical appointments if needed.



Stay active

- Maintain fitness and keep busy at home.
- If you must go outside to maintain your physical and/or mental wellness, **keep at least 2 metres (6 feet) distance from others at all times:**
 - choose “off-peak” times (e.g., early morning)
 - stay close to home (e.g., in your yard, or around the block)
 - avoid crowded areas (e.g., popular trails, main streets)



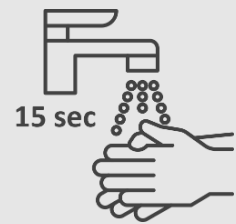
Connect socially and ask for help

- Stay in touch with friends and family through phone, instant messaging or video chat.
- If you begin to notice signs of depression or hopelessness in yourself or a loved one, please seek help. See [Additional Information](#).



Wash your hands and clean frequently touched surfaces

- Wash your hands often with soap and water.
- Dry your hands with a paper towel or with cloth towel that no one else will share.
- Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available.
- **Clean and disinfect** frequently touched surfaces in your home such as doorknobs and handles.



Additional Information

If you have questions about your underlying medical conditions or medications, contact your health care provider for advice.

- Public Health Agency of Canada’s [Daily Epidemiology Updates](#)
- How to support [vulnerable groups](#) during COVID-19
- [Tips for battling anxiety](#) for older adults during COVID-19
- [Things to do while physical distancing](#) for older adults
- [How to take care of yourself and others](#) during COVID-19
- Additional information for [people living with HIV or hepatitis C](#)
- Where to get help: [Resources for Ontarians experiencing mental health and addictions issues during the pandemic](#)
- Additional information for [parents of children](#) who are immunocompromised or have underlying medical conditions
- Additional information for [people living with cancer](#)
- If you have symptoms of COVID-19 or may have been exposed to COVID-19, see [How to Self-Isolate](#)