How to Protect Yourself from COVID-19

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 droplets generated when a person breathes, coughs, sneezes, talks, or sings.
- These droplets 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, gadgets) that have the COVID-19 virus on them may transmit the virus from your hands 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.

Get vaccinated
- Get fully vaccinated as soon as you are eligible to do so. 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 or exposed
- Stay home and get tested if you develop symptoms. See Public Health Ontario’s How to Self-isolate fact sheet.
- Unless advised otherwise by public health, stay home if you have been exposed to someone with COVID-19 even if you are feeling well. People can be infectious before they are sick.

Practice physical distancing and avoid crowded spaces
- Two metres distancing is the general recommendation, but further is better especially when indoors and unmasked, such as when eating.

Spend time outdoors or in well-ventilated indoor spaces
- When outdoors, practice physical distancing and wear a mask where distancing is not possible.
- Ensure your ventilation system is in good working order. If you don’t have a ventilation system, open windows to increase fresh air flow.

Wear a well-fitting mask in public
- Wear a well-fitting 2-3 layer mask (ideally with filter layer). No bandanas, scarves or neck gaiters. See Public Health Ontario’s Non-medical Masks and Face Coverings.
- Limit time without a mask in shared indoor spaces (e.g., meal breaks).

Practice respiratory etiquette and keep things clean
- Wash your hands frequently.
- Cover your coughs and sneezes.
- Clean high-touch surfaces regularly.