COVID-19 / Coronavirus

Information for patients who have been asked to self-isolate

How to self-isolate at home

To prevent the spread of COVID-19, please **self-isolate at home** until you get your test results. Your doctor has decided that you can safely be cared for at home.

What does self-isolation mean?

- Self-isolation means avoiding situations where you could infect other people.

- This means **you must avoid all situations where you may come in contact with others**. **Do not go to any of the following:**
  - Social gatherings
  - Work
  - School, college, or university
  - Child care
  - Athletic events
  - University
  - Hairstylist / barber
  - Faith-based gatherings, such as church, temple, or mosque
  - Healthcare facilities (hospitals, clinics, doctors' offices)
  - Grocery stores
  - Restaurants
  - Shopping malls
  - **All public gatherings**

- **Do not use public transportation**, including buses, taxis, or ride-sharing.

- As much as possible, **limit your contact with other people**.
  - Do not have visitors to your home
  - It's okay for friends, family or delivery drivers to drop off groceries. They should drop it **outside** your door.
  - You can also use delivery or pickup services for other household errands.
  - As much as possible, limit contact with others living in the same household. If they develop symptoms, they too should self-isolate.

- Cancel any non-essential household services (e.g. housecleaning, babysitter)

I was tested for COVID-19. How do I get my results?

1. **Wait 72 hours (3 full days) after your test**. This gives us time to process the test.

2. After the 3 days, call **1-833-707-2792** to get your results. This number is available Mon – Fri, 8:30 am - 4:30 pm.

3. If you have COVID-19, Northern Health will contact you to tell you what to do next.

Whether you've been tested or not, if you're self-isolating, you can stop self-isolating after 10 days as long as you do not have a fever or any more symptoms (a mild cough is ok).

About the new coronavirus

A new coronavirus has caused an outbreak of respiratory illness called COVID-19. Many of its characteristics are still unknown, but mild to severe illness has been reported. This novel (new) coronavirus has not been seen before in humans.

How is the coronavirus spread?
The coronavirus is spread from an infected person to others through:

- The air by coughing and sneezing

- Close personal contact, such as touching, kissing or shaking hands

- Touching an object or surface with the virus on it, then touching your mouth, nose, or eyes before washing your hands

- Contact with feces

What are the symptoms of COVID-19? What should I do if I feel sick?

Fever and tiredness

Cough

Breathing difficulties

If you have a new continuous cough or high temperature you should stay at home for 10 days.

Practice physical distancing (stay 2 meters away from other people) and stay home if possible.

Call the Northern Health COVID-19 online clinic at 1-844-645-7811. Don't go to your doctor or health care facility.

If your symptoms get worse, seek medical advice.

Handwashing and careful coughing/sneezing can help keep everyone safe

You and everyone in your household should follow good respiratory etiquette and hand hygiene (explained below).

Respiratory etiquette:
- When coughing or sneezing, cover your mouth and nose with a tissue, or cough or sneeze into your elbow, not your hand. Always wash your hands afterwards.
- Throw away tissues and other materials used to cover the nose or mouth in a separate plastic-lined container before adding them to other household garbage.

Hand hygiene:
- Wash your hands regularly and carefully with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- Wash all surfaces of your hands, including between the fingers and under and around your fingernails.
- To prevent infecting yourself or others, avoid touching your mouth, nose or eyes with unwashed hands.
- If soap and water aren't available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol. After applying the hand sanitizer, rub your hands together thoroughly until they're dry. This is an easy way to clean your hands, as long as they're not visibly dirty.
- For more information on hand-washing, see HealthLinkBC File #85 Hand Washing: Help Stop the Spread of Germs

How can I avoid getting and spreading COVID-19?

Wash hands for 20 seconds with soap and hot water, or use hand sanitizer.

Use a tissue for coughs and sneezes.

If you don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your elbow.

Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.

Avoid close contact with people who are unwell.

Even if you have no symptoms, work at home if possible and avoid social venues.

How to look after a person with COVID-19 at home

These tips will help you look after the sick person, or if you're the person with COVID-19, they'll help you care for yourself.

These tips will also help you prevent the spread of COVID-19 to other people in your household, and to others in your community

The sick person should:
- Self-isolate while they're sick and not go to work, the grocery store, or other public areas until
  - They no longer have symptoms AND
  - They're feeling well enough to return to normal activities AND
  - 10 days have passed since their symptoms started
- Limit their contact with others, as much as possible – this includes household members and visitors.
- Stay in a room by themselves, including sleeping at night, if possible.
- Be separated from others in the household.
  - If the sick person can't be separated from others, they should be sure to cough and sneeze into a tissue or their elbow, especially while others are in the same room. See the **Respiratory etiquette** section on page 2.
- Flush the toilet with the lid down – the virus may also be present in feces.

Other people in the household should:
- **Not** share toothbrushes, cigarettes, eating utensils, drinks, towels, washcloths, or bed linen with the infected person, or with each other.

More tips for household safety:
- Shared spaces like kitchens and bathrooms should be kept well ventilated, if possible.
- Avoid handling items used or touched by the sick person.
- Dishes and eating utensils should be cleaned with soap and water after use.
- High-touch areas such as toilets, bedside tables, and door handles should be cleaned daily using regular household cleaners or diluted bleach (20 mL (4 tsp) of bleach in 1L (4¼ cups) of water);
- Clean the clothes and bedclothes of the infected person using regular laundry soap and the hot water setting on your washer (60 - 90°C / 140 - 200°F).
- When cleaning or handling surfaces, clothing, or linen soiled with bodily fluids, use disposable gloves and protective clothing (e.g., plastic aprons), if available. Wash your hands immediately after.

For caregivers and other people in the household:

- If you have to touch the sick person so that you can take care of them (this is called "**direct contact care**"), the sick person should follow respiratory etiquette (they should cough or sneeze into a tissue or their elbow).
- After contact with the sick person, the caregiver should wash their hands for 20 seconds with soap and water, or use hand sanitizer (see **Hand hygiene** section on page 2).
- Avoid direct contact with the sick person's body fluids, especially their saliva or anything they cough up from their lungs.
- Use disposable gloves when you're providing care for their mouth or lungs, and when handling their feces, urine, and other waste. After all contact with them, do **hand hygiene** (see page 2).
- Anyone who's at higher risk of complications from COVID-19 should avoid caring for or coming in close contact with the sick person. This includes:
    - People who have chronic conditions such as diabetes, heart conditions, etc.
    - People over 70
    - People with weakened immune systems.
    - For guidance for pregnant women, please check www.bccdc.ca/health-professionals/clinical-resources/covid-19-care/clinical-care/pregnancy

- People who are looking after someone who has COVID-19 should limit their contact with other people as much as possible. They should monitor themselves for any signs of illness for 14 days from the last close contact with the sick person, and report new or worsening symptoms to their health care provider, or by calling the Northern Health COVID-19 Online Clinic & Information Line at **1-844-645-7811**.

If someone needs more care: Where and how to seek medical attention

If you, the sick person, or other people in your household need more care:

- Call the Northern Health COVID-19 Online Clinic & Information Line at **1-844-645-7811**

- If you need to see your family doctor, nurse practitioner or pharmacist, please **call ahead first**

- If you are having difficulty breathing, having chest pain, feeling confused, or having a hard time waking up, please **call 911** or **go to your nearest emergency department**.