

People who are at high risk for severe illness from COVID-19

While COVID-19 can make anyone sick, some Canadians are at risk of more severe disease or outcomes because of their age or if they have other medical conditions. If you are at risk of more severe disease or outcomes, you can take action to reduce your risk of getting sick from COVID-19.

Who is at risk of more severe disease or outcomes?

- › Older adults (increasing risk with each decade, especially over 60 years)
- › People of any age with chronic medical conditions including:
 - Lung disease
 - Heart disease
 - Hypertension (high blood pressure)
 - Diabetes
 - Kidney disease
 - Liver disease
 - Dementia
 - Stroke
- › People of any age who are immunocompromised , including those:
 - With an underlying medical condition (e.g., cancer)
 - Taking medications that lower the immune system (e.g., chemotherapy)
- › People living with obesity (BMI of 40 or higher)

Be prepared

- › Learn about COVID-19 and stay informed by visiting canada.ca/coronavirus.

- › Visit your **provincial/territorial** and municipal health websites to keep up to date about COVID-19 in your community.
- › Stock up on the supplies you would need if you were to have to stay home for a few weeks, such as groceries, pet food, and cleaning and disinfecting products.
- › Talk with your health care provider about how to protect yourself and ensure you have enough of your prescribed medications and medical supplies.
- › Prepare to stay connected with others by phone or email.
- › Ask family, a neighbour or friend to help with essential errands (e.g., picking up prescriptions, buying groceries).
- › Identify which services are available to deliver food or medications to your home.
- › Monitor yourself for **symptoms**.

How to reduce your risk of COVID-19

- › If possible, only leave your home for medically necessary appointments.
- › Stay away from people who are sick.
- › Avoid contact with others, especially those who have travelled or been exposed to the virus.
- › If contact cannot be avoided, take the following precautions:
 - keep at least 2 metres between yourself and the other people
 - give a friendly wave instead of a handshake, kiss or hug
 - keep interactions brief
- › Clean hands frequently with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or, if not available, use an **alcohol-based**



hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol.

- › Avoid touching your mouth, nose, and eyes and/or food with your hands.
- › Carry an **alcohol-based hand sanitizer** containing at least 60% alcohol when you are outside of your home.
- › Avoid touching high-touch surfaces such as doorknobs, handrails and elevator buttons in public places.
- › If you need to touch surfaces in public places, use a tissue or your sleeve to cover your hand.
- › At least once daily, clean and disinfect surfaces that you touch often, like toilets, bedside tables, doorknobs, phones and television remotes.
- › To disinfect, use only **approved hard-surface disinfectants** that have a Drug Identification Number (DIN). A DIN is an 8-digit number given by Health Canada that confirms the disinfectant product is approved and safe for use in Canada.
- › When approved hard surface disinfectants are not available for household disinfection, a diluted bleach solution can be prepared in accordance with the instructions on the label, or in a ratio of 5 millilitres (mL) of bleach per 250 mL of water OR 20 mL of bleach per litre of water. This ratio is based on bleach containing 5% sodium hypochlorite, to give a 0.1% sodium hypochlorite solution. Follow instructions for **proper handling of household (chlorine) bleach**.
- › If they can withstand the use of liquids for disinfection, high-touch electronic devices (e.g., keyboards, touch screens) may be disinfected with 70% alcohol at least daily.
- › Remind others who are sick, or may have been exposed to the virus, to stay away.
- › Avoid crowds and large gatherings.
- › Avoid cruises and non-essential travel outside of Canada.

What to do if you get a symptom of COVID-19

- › **Symptoms** of COVID-19 can:
 - take up to 14 days to appear after exposure to the virus
 - be very mild or more serious
 - vary from person to person
- › If you develop a **symptom**, stay home and call your health care provider or local public health unit and tell them about your symptoms.
- › Always call ahead before going to see a health provider or health care facility so that they can keep others from being exposed.
- › The following symptoms should be considered urgent:
 - significant difficulty breathing (e.g., can't catch breath, gasping)
 - chest pain or pressure
 - new confusion or difficulty waking up
- › If you develop these urgent symptoms, call 911 or your local emergency help line and inform them that you may have COVID-19 and are at high risk for complications.

We can all do our part in preventing the spread of COVID-19. For more information:

Canada.ca/coronavirus
or contact 1-833-784-4397