



NITHA Health Express

COVID-19 Special Edition

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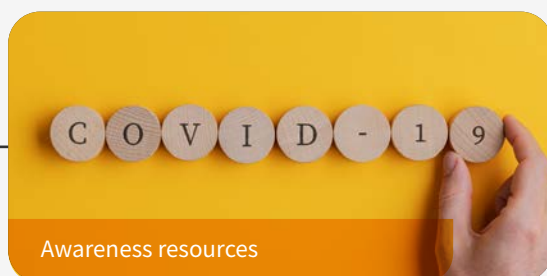


What is the coronavirus disease (COVID-19)?

COVID-19 is an illness caused by a coronavirus. Human coronaviruses are common and are typically associated with mild illnesses, similar to the common cold.

Coronaviruses (CoV) are a large family of viruses that cause illnesses ranging from the common cold to more severe diseases. COVID-19 is caused by a new strain of coronavirus. Symptoms of COVID-19 may be mild or more serious, such as fever, cough, and difficulty breathing. In more severe cases, an infection can cause pneumonia, severe acute respiratory syndrome, kidney failure, and even death. Symptoms may appear in as few as 2 days or as long as 14 days after exposure.

04



Awareness resources

06



Taking care of your mental health

In This Issue

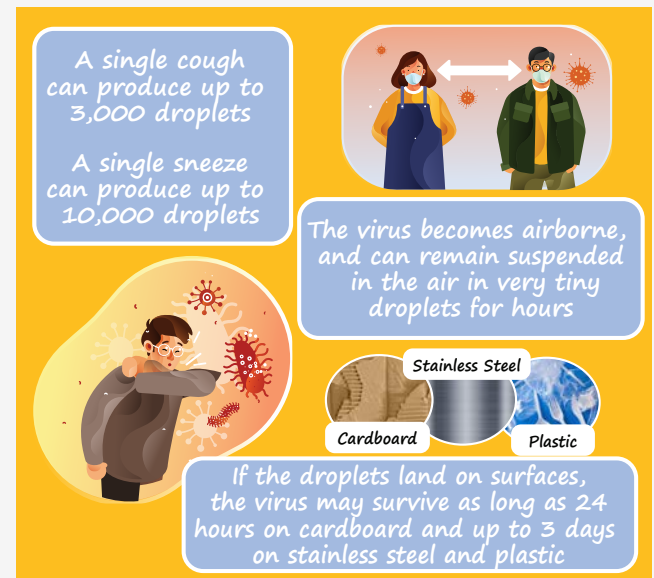
November, 2020

- 01 What is coronavirus disease (COVID-19)?
- 02 How does COVID-19 spread?
- 02 Symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19)
- 03 How is coronavirus (COVID-19) and influenza different?
- 04 Awareness resources
- 06 Taking care of your Mental Health
- 08 Protect yourself and your community from COVID-19
- 08 Message from the Executive Director

How does COVID-19 spread?

The virus is thought to be spread mainly from person-to-person;

- Between people who are in close contact with one another, such as touching or shaking hands.
- Through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs, sneezes or talks.
- If droplets are left on objects and surfaces after an infected person sneezes, coughs on, or touches them, other people may become infected by touching these objects or surfaces, and then touching their eyes, nose or mouth.



Symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19)

Symptoms of coronavirus disease may be very mild or more serious, such as: fever, cough, and difficulty breathing. Symptoms may also vary in different age groups. Some of the more commonly reported symptoms include:

- new or worsening cough
- shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- temperature equal to or over 38°C
- feeling feverish
- chills
- fatigue or weakness
- muscle or body aches
- new loss of smell or taste
- headache
- gastrointestinal symptoms (abdominal pain, diarrhea, vomiting)
- feeling very unwell

Children have been more commonly reported to have abdominal symptoms, and skin changes or rashes. In severe cases, infection can lead to death. Symptoms may take up to 14 days to appear after exposure to the virus.

Evidence indicates that the virus can be transmitted to others from someone who is infected but not showing symptoms.

This includes people who:

- have not yet developed symptoms (pre-symptomatic)
- never develop symptoms (asymptomatic)



How is coronavirus (COVID-19) and influenza different?

Influenza (Flu) and COVID-19 are both contagious respiratory illnesses, but they are caused by different viruses. COVID-19 is caused by infection with a new coronavirus (called SARS-CoV-2) and flu is caused by infection with influenza viruses. Because some of the symptoms of flu and COVID-19 are similar, it may be hard to tell the difference between them based on symptoms alone, and testing may be needed to help confirm a diagnosis. Flu and COVID-19 share many characteristics, but there are some key differences between the two.

Influenza (Seasonal Flu)

The flu can spread easily and quickly to anyone, even before you know you are sick. Indigenous people with chronic health conditions or living in overcrowded homes are at a higher risk of hospitalization and serious health complications from the flu.

Getting the flu shot can help keep you and your community healthy.

The flu shot can save lives:

- Young children, people over age 65, pregnant women and those who are in poor health are more likely to become very sick from the flu.
- The flu shot can help protect you and your family from the flu.

The flu shot works

- There are many different types of flu viruses. Every year, the flu shot protects against the expected 3 or 4 most common types of the virus.
- Everyone responds differently to the flu shot. The shot can either prevent the flu entirely or reduce the severity of the sickness.
- It usually takes 2 to 4 weeks to build protection after you get the flu shot.
- The flu shot does not prevent colds because they are caused by different germs.

The flu shot is safe

- You cannot get the flu virus from the flu shot.
- Most people do not have significant side effects from the flu shot.
- Serious side effects are very rare.
- If you have concerns or questions about the flu shot, talk to your nurse or doctor.

Who should get the flu shot

- Everyone 6 months of age and older.
- If you are pregnant or have an allergy to eggs, you can still safely get the flu shot.

NITHA urges you to take the flu shot to reduce rates of spreading the flu. Contact your health center or local healthcare provider to find out how to get your flu shot.

COLD, FLU, ALLERGIES OR COVID-19?

SYMPTOMS	COLD	FLU	ALLERGIES	COVID-19 (Can range from mild to serious)
Cough	Mild to Moderate	Common, can become severe	Sometimes	Common
Shortness of Breath	Rare	Rare	Rare, except with those with allergic asthma	In more serious infections
Fever	Rare	High, above 38°C (100.4°F). Can last 3-4 days	Never	Common
Chills	Can be present	Sometimes	Never	Sometimes
Fatigue or Weakness	Mild	Intense, can last up to 2-3 weeks	Sometimes	Can be present
Muscle/ Body Aches	Mild	Usual, often severe	Never	Can be present
Loss of Smell or Taste	Sometimes	Rare	Rare	Rare
Headache	Rare	Can be severe	Uncommon	Can be present
Diarrhea/ Vomiting	Never	Sometimes (in children)	Never	Sometimes
Stuffy/ Runny Nose	Common	Sometimes	Common	Has been reported
Sneezing	Usual	Sometimes	Usual	Has been reported
Sore Throat	Common	Common	Sometimes	Common
Extreme Exhaustion	Never	Usual, (starts early)	Never	Can be present

Sources: National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, Canada.ca, WHO

**** Information is still evolving.**

It takes a community to stop the spread, the best way to prevent the flu is by getting the flu shot.

Do you know that there are awareness resources available on our website to help protect yourself and your community?

PSAs and current alerts

Northern Inter-Tribal Health Authority is working with local health authorities and Partner Communities and actively monitoring the situation daily. We continue to reassess the public health risk based on the best available evidence as the situation evolves.

Hand hygiene & hand sanitizing

Wash hands when visibly soiled. Apply sanitizer if not visibly soiled. Recommended duration of the entire procedure: 40 to 60 seconds. Hand washing and hand sanitizer application resources available in English, Cree, and Dene.



Masking and PPE Donning & Doffing

Wearing a homemade non-medical mask/facial covering in the community is recommended for periods of time when it is not possible to consistently maintain a 2-metre physical distance from others, particularly in crowded public settings, such as stores, shopping areas, and public transportation. Please visit our website to learn more about how to safely wear and take off a non-medical mask or face covering.

Videos on PPE Donning & Doffing are available on our website.



NITHA Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) during COVID-19 Pandemic

Hours of Operation: 8:30am - 4:00pm
Email: nithaeoc@nitha.com
Toll Free: 1-855-559-5510

Coronavirus (COVID-19): Being prepared

At this time, the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) has assessed the public health risk associated with COVID-19 as low for the general population in Canada but this could change rapidly. There is an increased risk of more severe outcomes for Canadians:

- aged 65 and over
- with compromised immune systems
- with underlying medical conditions

In order to mitigate the impacts of COVID-19, everyone has a role to play. Each of us must understand how coronavirus spreads and how to prevent illness. Download available on website for Individuals, communities, schools and daycares, and for workplaces.

Environmental cleaning and disinfecting recommendations for healthcare facilities

Reducing the risk of exposure to COVID-19 by cleaning and disinfection is an important part of public spaces that will require careful planning. This guidance is intended for healthcare facilities.



Environmental
Cleaning and Disinfection
Recommendations
for
Community Facilities

Environmental
Cleaning and Disinfection
Recommendations
for
Healthcare Facilities

Please visit www.nitha.com/awareness-resources/ to learn more or to download these resources.

+ Coughing and sneezing

Covering coughs and sneezes and keeping hands clean can help prevent the spread of serious respiratory illnesses. To help the spread of germs:

- cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze
- throw used tissues in the trash
- if you don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your elbow, not your hands

+ Back to school

Visit our website for school posters that you can download for print.

+ How long does the coronavirus last on surfaces?

The family of the viruses that includes the one that causes COVID-10 can live on some of the surfaces you probably touch on a daily basis.

HOW LONG DO THE CORONAVIRUSES LAST ON SURFACES?

Here's a guide to how long coronaviruses - the family of the viruses that includes the one that causes COVID-19 - can live on some of the surfaces you probably touch on a daily basis.

Metal - 5 days Examples include: doorhandles, jewelry, elevators.	Stainless Steel - 2 to 3 days Examples include: refrigerators, pots and pans, sinks and some water bottles.
Wood - 4 days Examples include: furniture, decking.	Cardboard - 24 hours Examples include: shipping boxes.
Plastics - 2 to 3 days Examples include: packaging like milk containers and detergent bottles, subway and bus seats, backpacks, elevator buttons.	Paper - Up to 5 days The length of the time varies. Some strains of coronavirus live for only a few minutes on paper while others up to 5 days.
Glass - Up to 5 days Examples include: drinking glasses, measuring cups, mirrors, windows.	Copper - 4 hours Examples: pennies, baseballs, coins.
Water - Not found in water Coronavirus has not been found in drinking water. If it does get into the water supply, your local water treatment plant filters and disinfects the water, which should kill any germs.	Food - Does not spread through food Coronavirus doesn't seem to spread through exposure to food.
Aluminum - 2 to 8 hours Examples: soda cans, kettles, water bottles.	Ceramics - 5 days Examples: dishes, pottery, mugs.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

- Disinfect all surfaces and objects in your home and workstation daily with a household cleaning spray or wipe.
- Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and warm water, especially after visiting the supermarket or bringing in packages.

+ Myths vs. Facts of the coronavirus (COVID-19)

Know the difference between what is true about the coronavirus (COVID-19) and what is false.

The Government of Canada supports First Nations and Inuit communities in preparing for, monitoring and responding to COVID-19. For more information please visit: <https://www.sac-isc.gc.ca/eng/1581964230816/1581964277298>

MYTHS VS FACTS THE CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)

Know the difference between what is true about the Coronavirus COVID-19 and what is false.

MYTH	FACT
It is unsafe to receive packages from China.	It is safe to receive packages from China.
Old people are more likely to get Coronavirus.	Older people and people with pre-existing medical conditions (such as asthma, diabetes, heart disease) appear to be more susceptible to becoming severely ill with the virus.
Pets at home, such as dogs and cats can be infected with the new Coronavirus.	At present, there is no evidence that companion pets such as cats and dogs can be infected with the Coronavirus.
Antibiotics will help kill Coronavirus.	Since it is a virus, antibiotics will not work on Coronavirus and should not be used as a means of prevention or treatment.

TIPS FOR PROTECTING YOURSELF FROM GETTING SICK OR PREVENTING SPREADING THE CORONAVIRUS, INFLUENZA, OR RESPIRATORY INFECTIONS:

- Stay home if you are sick.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Avoid touching your face.
- Avoid touching surfaces people touch.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- Use hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available.
- Cover your mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze.
- Dispose of tissues immediately.
- Clean and disinfect surfaces that are frequently touched.



+ Cree and Dene audio clips

Audio resources available in Cree and Dene. This includes listening to symptoms, how to wear a mask, how testing works, how to wash your hands, and how to protect our elders.

+ Physical (social) distancing

Together, we can slow the spread of COVID-19 by making a conscious effort to keep a physical distance between each other. Physical distancing is proven to be one of the most effective ways to reduce the spread of illness during an outbreak. With patience and cooperation, we can all do our part. Visit our website to download the PHAC guidelines.

SOCIAL DISTANCING

Together, we can slow the spread of COVID-19 by making a conscious effort to keep a physical distance between each other. Social distancing is proven to be one of the most effective ways to reduce the spread of illness during an outbreak. With patience and cooperation, we can all do our part.

What does Social Distancing mean?

It means keeping a safe distance from others in order to minimize close contact with others, including:

- avoiding crowded places and large gatherings
- avoiding close greetings, such as handshakes
- staying at least 6 feet (2 meters) away from others
- avoiding contact with people on higher risk (e.g. older adults and those in poor health)
- keeping a distance of at least 2 metres (6 feet) from others in public places, such as in a store or public

Here's how you can practice social distancing:

- avoid close contact with others
- avoid crowded places and large gatherings
- avoid contact with people on higher risk (e.g. older adults and those in poor health)
- avoid contact with people on higher risk (e.g. older adults and those in poor health)
- avoid contact with people on higher risk (e.g. older adults and those in poor health)
- avoid contact with people on higher risk (e.g. older adults and those in poor health)

Remember to:

- wear your face mask for at least 20 seconds and avoid touching your face
- cough or sneeze into the bend of your arm
- avoid touching surfaces people touch

If you're concerned you may have COVID-19:

- isolate yourself from others as soon as you have symptoms
- if you are sick, stay home and avoid public places, get tested immediately and avoid visiting public
- if you have been in contact with someone who has COVID-19, stay home and avoid public places
- call a health care provider if you are ill and seeking medical attention

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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

KNOW THE DIFFERENCE: SELF-MONITORING, SELF-ISOLATION, AND ISOLATION FOR COVID-19

SYMPTOMS OF COVID-19

COUGH, FEVER, LOSS OF TASTE OR SMELL

SELF-MONITORING	SELF-ISOLATION	ISOLATION
<p>SELF-MONITORING</p> <p>You have a fever, cough, or loss of taste or smell.</p> <p>You have been in contact with someone who has COVID-19.</p> <p>You are not showing any symptoms.</p> <p>You are not showing any symptoms.</p> <p>You are not showing any symptoms.</p>	<p>SELF-ISOLATION</p> <p>You have a fever, cough, or loss of taste or smell.</p> <p>You have been in contact with someone who has COVID-19.</p> <p>You are showing symptoms.</p> <p>You are showing symptoms.</p> <p>You are showing symptoms.</p>	<p>ISOLATION</p> <p>You have a fever, cough, or loss of taste or smell.</p> <p>You have been in contact with someone who has COVID-19.</p> <p>You are showing symptoms.</p> <p>You are showing symptoms.</p> <p>You are showing symptoms.</p>

WE CAN ALL DO OUR PART IN PREVENTING THE SPREAD OF COVID-19. FOR MORE INFORMATION:

1-833-784-4397 Canada.ca/coronavirus phac.info.aspx?csc=canada

+ Know the difference: self-monitoring, self-isolation and isolation

What does it mean to self-monitor, and to self-isolate? Visit our website to download the PHAC guidelines.

Taking care of your Mental Health: Coping with stress in a healthy way

The coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic may be stressful for people. Fear and anxiety about a new disease and what could happen can be overwhelming and cause strong emotions in adults and children. Public health actions, such as social distancing, can make people feel isolated and lonely and can increase stress and anxiety.

Stress during an infectious disease outbreak can sometimes cause the following:

- Fear and worry about your own health and the health of your loved ones, your financial situation or job, or loss of support services you rely on.
- Changes in sleep or eating patterns.
- Difficulty sleeping or concentrating.
- Worsening of chronic health problems.
- Worsening of mental health conditions.
- Increased use of tobacco, and/or alcohol and other substances.



Helpful Tips

For those who may be feeling a sense of loss and/or a feeling like you don't have control, these are a few helpful tips to assist you during this time:

- Find comfort in your spiritual/personal beliefs and practices.
 - Maintain your regular routines as much as possible. Focus on what needs to happen today, and make a list of what you need to do in the next day or week to keep yourself safe and comfortable.
 - Be mindful. Pay attention to your thoughts, feelings and body sensations. This can help you understand why you're feeling anxious or stressed. If you're having trouble managing your stress or anxiety talk to someone you trust, contact your healthcare providers, or call the Hope for Wellness Helpline at **1-855-242-3310**.
-
- Practicing breathing techniques is one way to help you manage stress and anxiety. It can calm your nervous system and help you think more clearly. Take a slow deep breath in as you count to 5 and then exhale, also counting to 5 (repeat 10 times). Practice doing this throughout the day.
 - Be sure to rest and try get enough sleep. Lack of sleep can make you feel overwhelmed, which will make it harder to cope during stressful times.
 - Avoid or limit drinks with caffeine (i.e., pop, coffee, tea, energy drinks), they can make you feel anxious or restless and affect your sleep.
 - Avoid or limit drinks with alcohol. It can disrupt normal sleep patterns, cause changes in your mood, and make feeling of stress and anxiety worse.

For those with existing illness (i.e., anxiety disorder like post-traumatic stress disorder, mood disorders like major depressive disorder and/or psychotic disorders like schizophrenia) no alcohol use is the safest choice. Alcohol use can make symptoms of the mental illness worse.

For parents and caregivers, try model health and positive coping skills. Your child sees your emotions through your words, facial expressions, and actions. How you respond to the stress of a pandemic can affect how your child reacts. Modeling calm and constructive reactions to the event will help your child feel calmer and cope better. It's okay to have strong emotions. Name them (i.e., "I feel frustrated." Or "I feel sad.") Talk about how you feel and how you're going to cope (i.e., deep breathing, positive thinking) so your child learns how to do the same.

For Healthcare Workers and First Responders if you find yourself making the decision to physically isolate yourself to lower the risk to family or friends, it is important to remind yourself that you are valuable, and this includes your mental health. The effects of COVID-19 can cause a stir of emotions along with conflicting thoughts and beliefs as you are on the frontlines, know that you are not alone, and that you can reach out. You can contact the OCISM line, Hope for Wellness, and/or your local mental health office for support during this time.

If you are in self-isolation or you have been advised by health authorities to limit contact with others it's important to still keep your personal care routines (e.g., bathing), engage in healthy activities (e.g., stretching, meditation, listening to music), and connecting with friends and family through phone calls, text messaging, email, Skype, and FaceTime.

Taking care of your mental health. If you would like to seek help, please call:

- Health link: 811
- Hope for Wellness: 1-855-242-3310
- Kids Help Phone: 1-800-668-6868
- Occupational & Critical Incident Stress Management – For Healthcare Staff
Phone: 1-800-268-7708
Email: hc.ocism-gspic.sc@canada.ca

When you're struggling with mental health, know that it is ok to ask for help. We all hit a point when we need some extra support. Don't be afraid to let someone know directly how they could support you.



Indigenous Wellness Framework

It further is helpful to look at your personal healing through reflection of the four outlined elements of self. Through an Indigenous lens, we ask:

- ⤵ How can we find purpose for our physical self during this time?
- ⤵ How can we find hope through spiritual activities?
- ⤵ How can we create belonging through connecting with our emotional self?
- ⤵ How can we find meaning through reflection?

In recognizing one element, the physical has the ability to open up purpose to what we find ourselves experiencing, with that said, it may feel like your body is highly activated, and surviving Covid-19.



Protect yourself and your community from COVID-19

There is currently no vaccine to protect against COVID-19. The best way is to avoid being exposed to the virus that causes COVID-19. These are a few tips to help protect yourself and your community from the spread of viruses such as Influenza and COVID-19.

- ✓ **Wash your hands**
Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, or use alcohol based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
- ✓ **Physical distance**
When outside your home, it means staying at least 2 metres (or 6 feet) away from other people whenever possible.
- ✓ **Wearing a mask**
When physical distancing cannot be maintained, consider wearing a non-medical mask.
- ✓ **Stay at home**
Staying home and away from others when you are sick.
- ✓ **Cough and sneeze into your arm**
Coughing and sneezing into the sleeves or use a tissue.



Message from the Executive Director, Tara Campbell

Tansi, edlanet'e, greetings from the NITHA management and staff. We hope you enjoy this special edition of the NITHA Health Express, the primary focus being the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19).

Our newsletter covers what we have learned about the virus since its was officially declared a Global Pandemic on March 11. How it is spread, the symptoms to be aware of, and how to spot the differences between Influenza and COVID-19 are included. Please take some time to visit our website www.nitha.com and read the resources available that will help keep yourself, your family and your community safe.

It goes without saying, living amidst a pandemic presents its challenges as we go about our daily lives at home, at work and at school. The simple act of hugging a loved one and greeting a friend with a handshake is discouraged and we are forced to change the way we do things to ensure what we do heavily revolves around following public health guidelines. This can be difficult, but we must recognize how critical it is we continue to do so to keep our communities safe.

As cases of COVID-19 continues to rise in our communities, we must remain vigilant with following the public health guidelines and continue to practice physical distancing, have good hand hygiene and masking all of which has proven to be the best way to keep ourselves and our loved ones healthy.

Tara Campbell



Tara Campbell

Executive Director
Northern Inter-Tribal Health Authority

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