

What we know about COVID-19

COVID-19

COVID-19 is a respiratory illness caused by a new coronavirus. The long-term impacts of COVID-19 are not yet known.

Transmission

COVID-19 is spread by respiratory droplets, most often from person-to-person, and can spread before they begin to show symptoms.

COVID-19 can be spread:

- when sharing hugs and kisses
- when people gather close together, talking, laughing, singing, sneezing or coughing
- when people linger to talk, longer than 15 minutes, forgetting to physical distance
- when touching the mouth, nose or eyes after touching surfaces contaminated with the virus

While COVID-19 can spread from aerosols generated during medical or dental procedures, airborne transmission is not a common way the virus is spread. COVID-19 is not known to spread through airborne transmission in community settings, ventilation systems or through water.

Symptoms

Common [symptoms](#) of COVID-19 are fever, cough, trouble swallowing, sore throat, runny nose, loss of taste or smell, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, and difficulty breathing. Symptoms can take up to 14 days to appear. Older adults and children may also have general symptoms such as chills, headaches, sleeping more than usual, feeling disoriented, confusion, muscle aches, dizziness, weakness, or falls.

Potential for complications

Older adults and people with health conditions are at greater risk for serious illness, requiring hospital care. In very rare cases, some children can get an unusual inflammatory condition. Seek medical attention right away if a child is not improving or gets a rash, long lasting fever, pink eyes and/or swelling to hands and feet.

Steps to keep everyone safe

- Limit non-essential trips outside your home.
- Stay home if you are feeling unwell.
- Keep two metres distance from others and wear a face covering.
- Wash your hands often or use alcohol-based sanitizer.
- Avoid touching your face with unwashed hands.

- Cover your cough or sneeze with an elbow or a tissue.
- Clean and disinfect high touched surfaces.
- Download the [COVID alert mobile app](#).

Mask and face covering

Toronto [mask bylaw](#) requires everyone to wear a mask or face covering in indoor public spaces. The TTC has a similar mask bylaw. And effective October 3, 2020, masks are required in indoor public spaces and vehicles across Ontario. Wearing a mask can help reduce the spread of COVID-19. It is important to continue physical distancing, wash your hands often, and stay home when you are sick.

What to do if you have symptoms

If you have one or more symptoms of COVID-19, or you were in close contact with someone who has COVID-19, [get tested](#). Make an appointment at an [assessment centre](#) near you. Stay home and self-isolate while you wait for your test result.

To [self-isolate](#) means to stay home as you maybe infectious. Do not go outside, to public places, or use public transit. Shop online or call a friend to pick up supplies for you. Call your health care provider if you need help to relieve your symptoms. Call 911 if you or someone else is having difficulty breathing.

Ventilation or air flow

Good air flow can help reduce the spread of COVID-19. To ensure good air flow in your home:

- Open windows and doors, if it is safe or possible.
- Keep your heating and air conditioning systems well maintained.
- Use the highest efficiency filter that is compatible with your furnace, air conditioner, etc.
- When using ceiling or portable fans, use upward airflow rotation.
- Keep the area around air vents clear of furniture, etc.

There isn't evidence to demonstrate portable air cleaners can prevent the spread of COVID-19 but good ventilation in indoor spaces may help. Portable air cleaners may be useful in areas without good ventilation, for example, in a small room without windows.

Beware of fraud and scams

Do not purchase products with claims to protect you against COVID-19. There are no drugs approved for the prevention of COVID-19. Do not give your personal information to unsolicited callers. Toronto Public Health staff will never ask for your credit card or social insurance number.

More information

Visit our website at toronto.ca/COVID19 or call us at 416-338-7600.