

What do I do while waiting for my test results?

In December 2019 a new coronavirus called COVID-19 was found to be causing human illness in Wuhan, China. This virus has since spread to many other countries, including Canada and the United States.

You may have been exposed to COVID-19 through direct contact with an ill person or in your recent travels. Symptoms of human coronaviruses may be very mild or more serious, such as: fever, cough or difficulty breathing.

You are being tested for COVID-19. Please self-isolate while you wait to receive the laboratory results from your health care provider.

What is self-isolation?

Self-isolation means staying home and keeping away from other people. This is necessary to lower the chance of you spreading illness.

DO NOT attend activities or gatherings outside your home during this time. This includes work, school, university, health care and long-term care facilities, faith-based facilities (e.g., churches, mosques, etc.), grocery stores, restaurants and shopping malls.

What should I do while I am at home?

While you wait for your COVID-19 test results and further direction from your healthcare provider, you should monitor yourself for symptoms, including fever, cough, runny nose, sore throat, shortness of breath or breathing difficulties.

Should your symptoms change or worsen (e.g. difficulty breathing, shortness of breath) at any time, call Health Links - Info Santé (204-788-8200 or 1-888-315-9257), or call 911 if it is an emergency.

Advise health officials about your COVID-19 exposure history and that you are currently on self-isolation while you wait for your COVID-19 test results.

While at home, stay in your own room or separated from other members of your household (a minimum of 2 meters/6 feet away), including pets. Do not allow visitors. Use a delivery or pick-up service or ask friends or family members to drop off groceries and supplies at your front door to avoid direct contact. Notify service providers that regularly come into your home to provide necessary care or assistance to yourself or a family member (e.g., Home Care).

If you are breastfeeding, you can continue to breastfeed your baby. Wear a mask when near your baby, and practice good respiratory (cough and sneeze) etiquette. Be sure to wash your hands and your chest area thoroughly with soap and warm water before and after you touch your baby.

What can I do to care for myself while at home?

While recovering at home:

- Rest, eat nutritious food, and drink plenty of clear fluids (e.g. water).
- Take acetaminophen (Tylenol®) or ibuprofen (Advil®) for fever and soreness.
- Check with your healthcare provider whether you should still take vitamins or alternative medicines.
- Take your temperature by mouth (orally) with a digital thermometer at least twice a day.
- Do not eat, drink, smoke and/or chew gum 30 minutes before taking your temperature.
- Wait at least four hours after taking acetaminophen or ibuprofen.

Waiting for test results can be stressful. Connect with family or friends by phone, email or social media. Focus your attention on completing a task or hobby while you wait for your COVID-19 test results.

What can I do to stop the spread of COVID-19?

Hand-wash with soap and warm water for at least 15 seconds. Dry your hands thoroughly. If your hands are not visibly dirty, you can use an alcohol-based hand cleanser.

It is especially important to clean your hands:

- After coughing or sneezing
- After touching your mouth, eyes or nose
- Before and after touching your face mask (if you were provided a mask by your health care provider)
- Before, during or after you prepare food but try to avoid preparing food for others, if possible
- After touching shared and kitchen household items (e.g., dishes, towels, pillows, etc.)
- Before eating
- After toilet use
- When your hands are dirty

You should cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing and sneezing, or you can cough or sneeze into your sleeve. Throw used tissues in the garbage and immediately wash your hands, or use an alcohol-based hand cleanser.

If possible, use a separate bathroom from other members of your household. The bathroom should be cleaned frequently and the toilet lid closed when flushing to prevent the spread of germs.

Avoid sharing **household** and **personal care items** (e.g. dishes, towels, pillows, toothbrushes, cigarettes, etc.). Wash items thoroughly with soap and warm water, place in the dishwasher for cleaning or wash in your washing machine. Use hot water when operating the dishwasher or washing machine.

Clean commonly touched objects including door handles, toilets and faucets as well as electronic devices (e.g. phones, computers, tablets, etc.) after touching them. Use a regular household cleaner or make your own disinfectant by mixing one part bleach to nine parts water. Wear disposable gloves when cleaning household items, electronic devices and commonly-touched areas.

Ensure proper ventilation of your home. Open windows and doors, as weather allows.

What can I expect after I get my COVID-19 test results?

If your COVID-19 test results are negative, and you have travelled or been exposed to a case, you should continue to self-monitor and/or self-isolate for the remainder of the 14-day period (whichever you were advised to do prior to being tested for COVID-19). You will also be advised to stay home until your symptoms (e.g., fever, cough, runny nose, sore throat, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing) have resolved.

If your COVID-19 test results are positive, you can expect to be contacted from Public Health for further follow-up including daily monitoring of your symptoms.

Should your symptoms change or worsen (e.g. difficulty breathing, shortness of breath) at any time, call Health Links - Info Santé (204-788-8200 or 1-888-315-9257), or call 911 if it is an emergency.

For more information about COVID-19

Talk to a public health nurse. For a listing of public health offices, visit:

<http://www.manitoba.ca/health/publichealth/offices.html>

Call Health Links – Info Santé in Winnipeg at 204-788-8200; toll free elsewhere in Manitoba 1-888-315- 9257;

Or, visit:

Manitoba's coronavirus website:

www.manitoba.ca/covid19

Canada's Coronavirus website:

<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/coronavirus-disease-covid-19.html>