

Isolation for Individuals with Symptoms and/or Waiting for COVID-19 Test Results

This fact sheet is intended for individuals with a positive COVID-19 test result, individuals awaiting test results (whether or not they have symptoms or exposure) and individuals with COVID-19 symptoms who have not been tested.

Most people who get COVID-19 will have mild symptoms, but for some this virus can cause serious illness and even death. Most people who get sick with COVID-19 can recover at home, but need to isolate and monitor their symptoms. Care at home can help stop the spread of COVID-19 and help ensure that health care resources are available to those with severe COVID-19 symptoms requiring hospitalization.

NOTE: In times of increased community transmission and case numbers, public health officials may implement stricter requirements to reduce the spread of the virus. These additional measures may apply regionally or provincially. The online **COVID-19 Screening Tool** (<https://sharedhealthmb.ca/covid19/screening-tool/>) will provide guidance and direction on any new requirements.

Treatment for COVID-19 is available for people at higher risk of severe disease. If you have symptoms, it is important to get tested early as the treatment is only effective in the very early phases of infection. Please visit <https://manitoba.ca/covid19/treatment/index.html> or call Health Links – Info Santé (204-788-8200 or 1-888-315-9257) for more information, and to find out if you are eligible.

Do I need to isolate and for how long? If you:

- **If you have tested positive for COVID-19** from a test taken at a lab or provincial testing site, or using a rapid antigen test you must isolate.
- OR
- **If you develop COVID-19 symptoms and are not tested or are awaiting test results**, you should assume you have COVID-19 and you must isolate.
 - The duration of isolation depends on your vaccination status.
 - **If you are fully vaccinated and do not have symptoms** you need to isolate for five days from the date of your positive test.
 - **If you are fully vaccinated and have symptoms** you need to isolate for five days from the day your symptoms started or the date of your positive test, whichever is later. You must also continue to isolate until you no longer have a fever and your other symptoms have been improving over the past 24 hours.
 - **If you are not fully vaccinated** you need to isolate for 10 days from the day your symptoms started or the date of your positive test, whichever is later. You must also continue to isolate until you no longer have a fever and your other symptoms have been improving over the past 24 hours.
 - If you have travelled internationally, you must isolate for a minimum of 10 days, regardless of vaccination status. Individuals who travelled internationally, must follow Federal testing and isolation/self-isolation (quarantine) requirements.

Note: Fully vaccinated people who have finished their isolation period must wear a medical grade mask in public settings for five days and avoid any non-essential visits to high risk settings or non-essential contact with individuals at high risk for severe disease.

- **If you have been tested, have potential exposures to COVID-19 such as travel or close contact, and are waiting for your test results.** Isolate at home while you are waiting to get your test result. If your COVID-19 test result is negative, but you have been exposed to a case, you will need to continue to self-isolate (quarantine) for the entire 10 days and until your symptoms have improved for 24 hours, unless exempt. If you have traveled you must isolate for a minimum of 14 days, unless exempt from self-isolation (quarantine), and until you have been symptom free for 24 hours. If you are exempt from self-isolation (quarantine) you need to isolate until you have been symptom free for 24 hours.
- **If you have cold or flu-like symptoms but have NOT been exposed to COVID-19 through travel or close contact with a case.** You need to isolate. If your COVID-19 test result is negative and you have not travelled or been exposed to a case, you need to isolate until you have been symptom free for 24 hours.
- **If you have been tested, are asymptomatic, have no known exposures to COVID-19, and are waiting for your test results.**
- Individuals who are tested for reasons other than illness or exposures to COVID-19 (e.g., pre-operative, travel or workplace testing) do not need to isolate while waiting for their test result.

Do my household members need to self-isolate (quarantine)?

If you have a positive test result, or have symptoms and are either awaiting test results or have chosen not to be tested, all household members, unless otherwise exempt, should also self-isolate (quarantine). Self-isolation (quarantine) for close contacts of a COVID-19 case is for 10 days after their last exposure. If there is more than one COVID-19 case in the household, household members should continue to self-isolate (quarantine) for 10 days, or until the last case in the household finishes their isolation, whichever is later.

Exemptions from self-isolation (quarantine) are in place for asymptomatic household members if they are fully immunized for COVID-19 at the time of exposure and do not have a medical condition that would impact vaccine effectiveness, or have had a COVID-19 infection in the past 6 months.

All individuals who are exempt from self-isolation (quarantine), particularly household contacts, need to be very cautious while the case or person with symptoms is isolating, and avoid any non-essential visits to high-risk settings or non-essential contact with individuals at high risk for severe disease from COVID-19. Individuals should self-monitor for symptoms of COVID-19 for 14 days following any exposure, and isolate immediately if any develop and get tested. Rapid antigen testing is available at test sites for asymptomatic household close contacts who are exempt from self-isolation (quarantine) to monitor for asymptomatic transmission. For more information on rapid antigen testing see <https://www.gov.mb.ca/covid19/testing/rat.html>.

How will I find out about my test results?

Results can be accessed securely online at <https://sharedhealthmb.ca/covid19/test-results/>.

You may receive a text message to let you know that your test result is available on the portal. The results will not be included in the text. If your test results come back positive for COVID-19, public health officials will also contact you directly.

Timelines for COVID-19 test results may vary due to current testing volumes and the location where you were tested. It may take several days for COVID-19 test results to become available. You should continue to isolate until you receive your test results.

If you do not have a Manitoba Health Family Registration Card, are not a resident of Manitoba, or you are unable to access your test results, you can call the COVID Line at Health Links – Info Santé at **204-788-8200** or toll free at **1-888-315-9257**.

While waiting for your testing results you should use the **Contact Tracing Resource Tool** (https://manitoba.ca/asset_library/en/covid/covid-contact-tracing-tool.pdf) to identify your close contacts. This will help you in the event you test positive and need to notify close contacts.

If you tested positive for COVID-19 you will receive a call from a public health official. Public health officials, include regional public health, the Public Health COVID-19 Contact Center, the Canadian Red Cross, 24/7 In Touch, and other partners. These officials will ask you important questions to help you identify contacts, instruct you on isolation, and provide you with information on treatment, if eligible.

Who notifies my close contacts?

If you tested positive for COVID-19, you need to notify your close contacts. Note in some settings, such as personal care homes, shelters, and health care facilities, public health officials will work with the facility to notify close contacts.

You can use the Contact Tracing Resource Tool to figure out who your close contacts were. You can call, text or email your close contacts, whatever you find easiest. Key points to pass along include:

- That you tested positive for COVID-19
- The last time you were in close contact with them

Information on how to notify your contacts can be found at: <https://www.gov.mb.ca/covid19/testing/monitoring/index.html>.

More information for close contacts on self-isolation (quarantine), including duration, exemptions, how to monitor for symptoms and protect household members, can be found at (<https://manitoba.ca/covid19/fundamentals/self-isolation.html>) or in the [Self-isolation \(quarantine\) for Contacts of Cases](#) fact sheet.

Why do I need to notify my close contacts?

Notifying your close contacts gives them the opportunity to self-isolate (quarantine) and can reduce the chances of further transmission. This will protect family, friends, the broader community, as well as critical health care resources.

What does isolation mean?

Isolation requires staying at home and avoiding contact with other people (including household members) to prevent spreading the disease to others in your home and your community. This means confining your activities to your home and outdoor property. If you live in a condo or multi-dwelling complex, you must stay in your suite. You may use your private balcony as long as it is two metres (six feet) away from your neighbour's balcony. Until you are finished your isolation, do not leave home to go to work, school or other public places (e.g., don't go for curbside pickup from stores and restaurants, places of worship), unless you require emergency or urgent medical care.

While at home, stay in your own room or on a separate floor from other members of your household.

If possible, use a separate bathroom. If you must share a bathroom, it should be cleaned and disinfected frequently. If you need to leave your room or floor, wear a medical mask and stay at least two metres (six feet) away from other members of your household. You should also avoid contact with pets that live in your home. For information about living with or caring for a household member with COVID-19 see <https://manitoba.ca/covid19/updates/resources.html>.

You must not have any visitors over to your home during this time. If you live alone, arrange to have groceries and supplies dropped off at your door to minimize contact with others. Cancel or notify any service providers who regularly come into your home that a household member is sick, has COVID-19, or is waiting test results. This includes home care workers, occupational therapists, physiotherapists, social workers, etc. They will discuss how best to provide care during this time.

How do I self-monitor my symptoms?

Anyone who is isolating should also be monitoring their health for any new or more severe symptoms.

This means:

- Identifying any new or worsening symptoms, including fever, cough, headache, runny nose, sore throat, shortness of breath or breathing difficulties.
- Taking your temperature twice a day (morning and night), using an oral (mouth) digital thermometer. It is important to get an accurate temperature reading. Do not eat, drink, smoke or chew gum for 30 minutes prior to taking your temperature. Wait at least 4 hours after you have taken acetaminophen (Tylenol®) or Ibuprofen (Advil®).
- Using the [Temperature Self-Monitoring Form](#) to record your temperature, and any other symptoms you may experience during the isolation period.
- Lingering symptoms such as cough or loss of taste or smell can persist beyond the isolation period, and if present, are not reasons for continuing isolation.

What should I do if my symptoms get worse?

If you start to feel worse during your isolation period, call Health Links – Info Santé at **204-788-8200** or **1-888-315-9257**). A nurse will assist you in determining whether or not you need a medical assessment.

Call 911 if your symptoms are severe (i.e. new or severe chest pain, trouble breathing, bluish lips or face, sudden confusion, symptoms of stroke such as leg or arm weakness, numbness, slurred speech or facial drooping).

It is important to seek medical attention early to get the care you need.

What can I do to care for myself while 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 health care provider to find out if you should still take vitamins or alternative medicines.
- Isolating can be stressful and you may feel lonely. Stay connected with family or friends by phone, email, social media or other technologies.

What can I do to stop the spread of COVID-19 to others in my home?

When you are sick, there are a variety of precautions you should take to protect others. You should:

Clean your hands regularly

Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 15 seconds or use alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60 per cent alcohol:

- Before and after preparing food (avoid preparing food for others)
 - Before eating
 - After using the toilet
 - After touching shared household items (e.g., dishes, towels, etc.)
 - Before and after using a face mask
 - After disposing of waste (e.g. a tissue) or handling contaminated laundry and whenever hands look dirty
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Cover your coughs and sneezes

- Cough or sneeze into your sleeve or a tissue.
- Throw used tissues in the garbage and immediately wash your hands, or use an alcohol based hand sanitizer.

Avoid sharing household and personal items

- Do not share dishes, drinking glasses, cups, eating utensils, towels, bedding or other items.
- Do not share cigarettes or other items that are put in the mouth.

Keep your environment clean

- Clean and disinfect high touch areas (toilets, taps, light switches, doorknobs, TVs, phones, electronics and TV remotes) at least twice daily, or as needed.
- Use store bought disinfectant. If not available, use a diluted bleach solution (20 ml [four teaspoons] bleach for every litre of water) and allow the surface to remain wet for one minute before scrubbing.
- Use hot water when operating the dishwasher or washing machine.

Make sure your home has good airflow.

- Open the window, as weather allows.

What if I live with someone who is at higher risk of developing severe COVID-19 symptoms?

Some people are at greater risk of developing severe symptoms that can result in hospitalization and even death. They include people who are 60 years of age and older, people with chronic health conditions or weakened immune systems (e.g., people undergoing cancer treatment).

Speak to your public health official or contact Health Links – Info Santé if you live with someone at higher risk of developing severe COVID-19 symptoms, or if isolating in the home will be difficult. Public health officials can assist with finding alternative accommodations for yourself, or potentially those at higher risk, to reduce the risk to family and household members. If the person with COVID-19 starts to feel worse or has any of the below symptoms, **call 911**.

- new or severe chest pain
- trouble breathing
- bluish lips or face
- sudden confusion
- symptoms of stroke, such as leg or arm weakness, numbness, slurred speech, or facial drooping

For more information about COVID-19:

Call:

- Health Links – Info Santé at **204-788-8200** or **1-888-315-9257** Or visit:
 - Caring for Someone with COVID-19 in the home – www.manitoba.ca/covid19/resources/index.html#factsheets
 - Manitoba government's COVID-19 website – www.manitoba.ca/covid19/
 - Government of Canada's COVID-19 website – www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/coronavirus-disease-covid-19.html
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