

# How to quarantine (self-isolate) at home when you may have been exposed to COVID-19 and have no symptoms



People with COVID-19 do not always recognize their early symptoms. Even if you do not have symptoms now, it is possible to transmit COVID-19 before you start showing symptoms or without ever developing symptoms.

You need to quarantine (self-isolate) for 14 days if, you:

- › are returning from travel **outside of Canada** (mandatory quarantine)\*
- › had close contact with someone who has or is suspected to have COVID-19
- › have been told by public health that you may have been exposed and need to quarantine (self-isolate)

Quarantine (self-isolate) means that, for 14 days you need to:

- › **stay at home** and monitor yourself for **symptoms**, even just one mild symptom
- › **avoid contact with other people** to help prevent transmission of the virus prior to developing symptoms or at the earliest stage of illness
- › **do your part to prevent the spread of disease** by practicing **physical distancing** in your home
- › **monitor yourself for symptoms**, such as 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) and feeling very unwell.

- › **take and record your temperature daily** (or as directed by your **public health authority**) and avoid using fever-reducing medications (e.g. acetaminophen, ibuprofen) as much as possible. These medications could mask an early symptom of COVID-19.

## If you start to develop symptoms within 14 days of your quarantine, you must:

- › **isolate** yourself from others as soon as you notice your first symptom
- › immediately call a local **public health authority** to discuss your symptoms and travel history, and follow their instructions carefully

If you are at risk of more severe disease or outcomes you should monitor yourself for worsening or urgent symptoms (e.g., significant difficulty breathing, chest pain or pressure, new confusion or difficulty waking up). If you develop 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.

### \* Quarantine Act

The Government of Canada has implemented an Emergency Order under the Quarantine Act that requires persons entering Canada—whether by air, sea or land—to quarantine (self-isolate) themselves for 14 days if they are asymptomatic in order to limit the introduction and spread of COVID-19. The 14-day period begins on the day the person enters Canada.



You can also use the [online self-assessment tool](#) (if available in your province or territory) to determine if you need further assessment or testing for COVID-19.

**Note:** If you are living with a person who is isolated because they have or are suspected to have COVID-19, your self-isolation period will be extended for an additional 14 days. Seek direction from your [public health authority](#).

To quarantine (self-isolate), take the following measures:

## Limit contact with others

- › Avoid quarantining at home if you can't separate yourself from those who live with you. For example, if you
  - live in a group or communal living setting,
  - share a small apartment,
  - live in the same household with large families or many people,
  - have roommates who have not travelled with you that you cannot avoid, or
  - your location is a camp, student dorm or other group setting where there is close contact and you share common spaces.
- › Stay at home or the place you are staying in Canada (do not leave your property).
- › Only leave your home to seek time-sensitive medical services (use private transportation for this purpose).
- › Do not go to school, work, other public areas or use public transportation (e.g., buses, taxis).
- › Do not have any guests, even if you are outdoors.
- › Avoid contact with people who are at **risk of more severe disease or outcomes**, including: older adults, people of any age with chronic medical conditions, people of any age who are immunocompromised, and people living with obesity (BMI > 40)
- › Avoid contact with others in the same household, especially those you have not travelled with.
- › If you are staying in a hotel, do not use shared spaces such as lobbies, courtyards, restaurants, gyms or pools.

- › If contact cannot be avoided, take the following precautions:
  - limit interactions with others in the household and wear a mask or face covering if a 2 metres distance cannot be maintained
  - stay in a separate room and use a separate bathroom, if possible. This includes if you are living with friends/family who did not travel with you.
- › Some people may transmit COVID-19 even though they do not show any symptoms. Wearing a **non-medical mask or face covering** (i.e., made with at least two layers of tightly woven fabric, **constructed** to completely cover the nose and mouth without gaping, and secured to the head by ties or ear loops) if close contact with others cannot be avoided, can help protect those around you.
- › Avoid contact with animals, as there have been several reports of people transmitting COVID-19 to their pets.

## Things you can do while in quarantine (self-isolation)

While keeping a physical distance of 2 metres from others, you can:

- › greet with a wave instead of a handshake, a kiss or a hug
- › ask family, a neighbour or friend to help with essential errands (e.g., picking up prescriptions, buying groceries)
- › use food delivery services or online shopping
- › exercise at home
- › use technology, such as video calls, to keep in touch with family and friends through online dinners and games
- › work from home
- › go outside on your private balcony or deck, walk in your yard or get creative by drawing chalk art or running back yard obstacle courses and games

## Keep your hands clean

- › **Wash your hands often** with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds, and dry with disposable paper towels or dry reusable towel, replacing it when it becomes wet.
- › You can also remove dirt with a wet wipe and then use an **alcohol-based hand sanitizer** containing at least 60% alcohol.
- › Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.
- › Cough or sneeze into the bend of your arm or into a tissue.

## Keep surfaces clean and avoid sharing personal items

- › 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.
- › Do not share personal items with others, such as toothbrushes, towels, bed linen, non-medical masks or face coverings, utensils or electronic devices.

## Supplies to have at home when in quarantine (self-isolation)

- Non-medical mask** or face covering (i.e., made with at least two layers of tightly woven fabric, **constructed** to completely cover the nose and mouth without gaping, and secured to the head by ties or ear loops)
- Disposable paper towels
- Thermometer
- Running water
- Hand soap
- Alcohol-based hand sanitizer** containing at least 60% alcohol
- Dish soap
- Regular laundry soap
- Regular household cleaning products
- Hard-surface disinfectant that has a Drug Identification Number (DIN), or if not available, concentrated (5%) liquid bleach and a separate container for dilution
- Appropriate cleaning products for high-touch electronics

## Work-related travel for essential workers

Certain persons who cross the border regularly to ensure the continued flow of goods and **essential services**, or individuals who receive or provide other essential services to Canadians, are exempt from needing to quarantine (self-isolate) due to travel outside of Canada, as long as they are asymptomatic (do not have symptoms of COVID-19).

### They must:

- › wear a non-medical mask or face covering while in public settings if physical distancing cannot be maintained
- › continually monitor your health for signs and symptoms of COVID-19, including for 14 days each time you re-enter Canada.
- › respect the public health guidance and instructions of the area where you are travelling and prevention measures from your workplace. Stay in your place of residence as much as possible.

If you have been instructed by public health to quarantine for any other reason (for example, you have been in close contact with a case), inform your local public health authority of your status as an essential worker and follow their directions.

**We can all do our part in preventing the spread of COVID-19.**

**For more information, visit**

**[Canada.ca/coronavirus](https://Canada.ca/coronavirus) or contact  
1-833-784-4397**