

Ministry of Health

Preventing 2019-nCoV Novel Coronavirus from Spreading to Others in Homes and Communities

Version 1 – February 7, 2020

This fact sheet provides basic information only. It must not take the place of medical advice, diagnosis or treatment. Always talk to a health care professional about any of your health concerns.

This fact sheet is important for you to read and understand if:

- You have been asked to self-isolate OR
- You live with someone who is self-isolating

Because 2019-nCoV is a new virus, the exact way it spreads is not well understood. However, it is possible for 2019-nCoV to spread from people who are sick to others with whom they have close contact. Close contact involves situations such as caring for or living with someone. It is important to take steps so that the virus is not spread to others.

For people who have, or who may have, 2019-nCoV

If you have been asked to self isolate, there are a number of things that you can do to help keep those around you from catching the virus:

- Follow the advice your health care provider or local public health has given you. Ask your health care provider if you have questions about this advice and make sure you have the information you need, including the contact information for your public health unit (if you don't already have it).

- Stay at home. Do not go to work, school or other public places.
- If travel is required, use a private vehicle. If that is not possible, a hired vehicle (e.g., taxi) can be taken while wearing a mask and sitting in the rear passenger seat with the window open (weather permitting). Avoid public transit.
- Stay in a separate room away from other people in your home as much as possible and use a separate bathroom if you have one. Make sure that shared rooms have good airflow (e.g., kitchen, bathrooms). Keep the windows open in these rooms if possible.
- Cover your coughs and sneezes. Have tissues with you to be able to cover coughs, sneezes or to wipe or blow your nose. If you do not have a tissue with you, cover your mouth and nose with your upper sleeve or elbow, but not your hands. Put used tissues in a wastebasket lined with a plastic bag and immediately wash your hands with soap and water. When emptying the wastebasket, try not to touch used tissues. Wash your hands immediately after handling waste.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for a minimum of 15 seconds. Dry your hands with a paper towel, or with your own cloth towel that no one else shares. You can use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available and if your hands are not visibly dirty.
- Limit the number of visitors in your home and keep a safe distance of two metres from others. Only have visitors who you must see and keep the visits short.
- In addition, wear a mask that covers your nose and mouth. If you cannot wear a mask, visitors should wear a mask when they are in the same room as you, and wash their hands after they leave.
- If you must leave your house to see a health care provider, wear a mask over your nose and mouth when you are within two metres of other people.
- Tell all health care providers that you are being tested for 2019-nCoV, or that you have 2019-nCoV. This includes telling paramedics if you need to take an ambulance. This will help health care providers to take steps to keep themselves and others from catching 2019-nCoV.
- You can stop these activities if you have been told by your health care provider and/or your public health unit that you DO NOT have 2019-nCoV.

For people who live with someone who has, or who may have, 2019-nCoV

If you are caring for or living with someone who has or may have 2019-nCoV, you are considered a '2019-nCoV close contact'. Your local public health unit will give you special instructions about how to monitor your own health, whether you should self isolate and what to do if you start to feel sick. Be sure to tell health care providers that you are a close contact of someone with 2019-nCoV.

There are a number of general things that you can do to protect yourself and others:

- Have only people in the home who are essential for providing care:
- People who are not taking care of the person, should stay in another room or be separated from the person as much as possible.
- Keep seniors and people with long-term or chronic conditions away from the person (e.g., diabetes, heart, lung or kidney problems). These people can get very sick if they get 2019-nCoV. Contact your public health unit if you need more information about people at home who may be at high risk.
- It's always a good practice to take precautions when in contact with someone's blood or body fluids. Wear a mask and gloves when you touch or have contact with the person's saliva or body fluids. Body fluids include blood, sweat, vomit, urine and diarrhea.
- Take the gloves and mask off right after you provide care and dispose of them in the wastebasket. Take off the gloves first and clean your hands with soap and water before taking off your mask. Clean your hands again with soap and water before touching your face or doing anything else.
- Do not share dishes, drinking glasses, cups, eating utensils, cigarettes, towels, bedding or other items with the person. After use, these items should be washed with soap or detergent and warm water. No special soap is needed.
- Clean the areas in your home that get touched a lot with regular household cleaners on a daily basis. Clean items that become dirty more often, including toilets, sink tap handles, doorknobs and bedside tables.

- Wash laundry thoroughly. There is no need to separate the clothes from a person who is being tested for 2019-nCoV or who has 2019-nCoV from other household laundry, but you should wear gloves when handling this laundry. Clean your hands immediately after removing your gloves with soap and water.
- The things that you use to help to care for the person can go into regular garbage bins. When emptying wastebaskets, take care to not touch used tissues, or used protective clothing such as gloves and masks. Lining the wastebasket with a plastic bag makes waste disposal easier and safer. Clean your hands after emptying the wastebasket with soap and water.

For more information

If you or other people in your home cannot follow these tips, talk to your health care provider and your local public health unit. For example, if you do not have masks and gloves, talk to your local public health unit to find out where you can get these items.

You can find your local public health unit by calling Service Ontario at 1-866-532-3161 or visiting the Ministry of Health's public health unit locator tool at <http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/common/system/services/phu/locations.aspx>

Additional information on 2019-nCoV can be found on the Ministry's of Health [website on 2019-nCoV](#).