

CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)

What is COVID-19?

- Coronaviruses are a large family of common germs (viruses). They usually cause mild illness similar to the common cold; however, some coronaviruses can cause severe breathing illnesses such as Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) and Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS).
- COVID-19 is an illness caused by a new coronavirus.

What are the symptoms of COVID-19?

- Symptoms of COVID-19 can range from none (asymptomatic) to severe illness.
- Common symptoms include fever, chills, cough, shortness of breath and breathing difficulties. Other symptoms can include being tired or weak, muscle or body aches, new loss of smell or taste, headache, abdominal pain, diarrhea, and vomiting.
- In severe cases, infection can result in pneumonia, respiratory failure, kidney failure and death.
- Symptoms may take up to 14 days to appear after exposure to the virus.

How does COVID-19 spread?

- It is spread through droplets from the mouth and nose when an infected person coughs, sneezes or talks.
- It can also be spread during close personal contact such as hugging or shaking hands.
- Risk of spread is increased if indoors, or in a space with poor air circulation.
- While less common, COVID can also be spread by touching the eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands after touching a surface or object that has the virus on it.

Is there a vaccine or medication for COVID-19?

- There is no specific medicine for COVID-19 yet. People with COVID-19 may need medical care to help manage their symptoms.
- There are several vaccines that have been approved for use to protect the public from COVID-19.
- To book your COVID-19 vaccine please contact your local Public Health Unit, or visit Ontario's provincial booking page at <https://covid-19.ontario.ca/book-vaccine/>.
- The provincial booking system can also be accessed by calling 1-888-999-6488.

What are Healthcare settings doing to prevent the spread of COVID-19?

- All staff, patients, and visitors are screened for signs, symptoms, and exposures to COVID-19.
- Testing is used for any patients or staff who fails screening.
- Masks are being given out at the doors and are worn hospital-wide by staff, visitors, and patients.
- Physical distancing, plastic barriers and added cleaning practices have been put in place

What can you do to prevent the spread of COVID-19?

- Wear a properly fitting mask that covers your nose and mouth when in public settings where physical distancing of 2 metres cannot be maintained.
- Clean your hands often with soap and water or use hand sanitizer.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid unnecessary close contact with others, and avoid crowds and indoor spaces with poor air circulation.
- Clean and disinfect objects and surfaces that you touch a lot.
- Cover your cough and sneezes with a tissue or sneeze into your elbow. Throw the tissue in the garbage and clean your hands afterwards.
- Stay home if you are not feeling well, and get tested for COVID-19 if you think you might be sick with COVID-19 or have been in contact with someone who is sick with COVID-19.

For more information visit:

- <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection.html>
- <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>
- <https://www.hamilton.ca/coronavirus>

Adherence to Infection Prevention and Control measures by staff and visitors is required to prevent spread of the virus.

**Stop the spread of germs and infection.
Clean your hands.**



This fact sheet provides basic general information only and is to be used as a quick guide, not as a complete resource on the subject. If you have any further questions, ask Infection Prevention & Control or your health care provider.® Hamilton Health Sciences and