

What to do if you are positive for COVID-19 and in self-isolation?

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, and has recently been classified as a pandemic by the World Health Organization.

With your recent positive COVID-19 test result, you are being asked to self-isolate and recover at home to limit the spread of COVID-19 to others.

Why am I being asked to self-isolate at home if I have a positive COVID-19 laboratory test?

Roughly 80 per cent of those infected with COVID-19 develop mild cold or flu-like symptoms and will recover on their own. But a small number of those infected with COVID-19 will develop severe symptoms and require hospitalization.

People with mild symptoms are asked to self-isolate at home until they are better, so that health care resources will be available for anyone with severe COVID-19 symptoms requiring hospitalization.

You will receive regular calls from public health while you are recovering at home to monitor your condition.

What should I do if my symptoms get worse?

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.**

How long do I need to self-isolate?

Unless public health tells you differently, you should continue to self-isolate for 14 days from the time your symptoms started. You should no longer have a fever and your symptoms should have also improved.

Can I still breastfeed?

If you are breastfeeding, you can continue to breastfeed your baby.

- Wear a mask when near your baby.
- Cough or sneeze into a tissue or into your sleeve to avoid spreading germs.
- 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 health care provider to find out if you should still take vitamins or alternative medicines.

Self-isolating while you're recovering can be stressful. Connect with family or friends by phone, email or social media. Try to do things you enjoy while you recover, while still getting the rest you need.

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

While at home, stay in your own room or separated from other members of your household (a minimum of two metres/six feet away), including pets.

Wash your hands 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 your health care provider gave you one)
- before, during or after you prepare food (Note: you should avoid preparing food for others)
- before and after touching shared 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 that is not used by 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 used objects after touching them. This includes door handles, toilets and faucets and electronic devices (e.g., phones, computers, tablets, etc.).

- 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.

Make sure your home is properly ventilated. Open windows and doors, 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 those 60 years of age and older and those with chronic health conditions or weakened immune systems (e.g., people undergoing cancer treatment, etc.). If possible, they should find somewhere else to live until you are better.

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

Do not allow people to visit you. Advise service providers that regularly come into your home to care for or assist yourself or a family member (e.g., home care, occupational or physiotherapy, social worker, etc.) that you have been diagnosed with COVID-19.

Use 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.

For more information about COVID-19:

- Talk to your public health nurse
- 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:
www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection.html