



## Durham Region Health Department **Facts about...**



# **Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)**

## **What is it?**

COVID-19 is a viral infection that primarily affects the lungs. Some people may have a mild illness. Others may get very sick, including seniors or people with a pre-existing health condition. Some people are at greater risk of getting COVID-19 because of their work or living conditions. Very rarely, some children can get a serious inflammatory condition. The long-term effects of COVID-19 are not fully known.

People at greatest risk of COVID-19 infection or COVID-19 related complications include:

- Adults 65 years of age or older
- Adults and children with chronic health conditions
- Pregnant individuals
- Residents of long-term care homes and other chronic care facilities
- Health care workers & first responders
- Individuals in or from First Nations, Métis, and Inuit communities
- Members of racialized and other equity-deserving communities
- People who provide essential community services

## **What are the common symptoms of COVID-19?**

Symptoms can be very different from one person to the next. People with COVID-19 can experience no symptoms, mild cold and flu-like symptoms, or severe symptoms. A person may be infectious for up to 2-3 days before showing symptoms. If you have symptoms listed below you may have COVID-19 and may be contagious:

- Fever and/or chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath
- Decrease or loss of taste or smell
- Extreme fatigue
- Muscle aches or joint pain
- Gastrointestinal symptoms (nausea, vomiting, diarrhea)
- Sore throat
- Runny nose or nasal congestion
- Headache

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If you require this information in an accessible format, contact 1-800-841-2729.



# How is it spread?

COVID-19 is mainly spread when:

- A person breathes in air close to an infected person who is exhaling small droplets and particles that contain the virus,
- Small droplets and particles that contain the virus land on the eyes, nose, or mouth, especially through splashes and sprays like a cough or sneeze,
- Touching the eyes, nose, or mouth with hands that have the virus.

# How to protect yourself and others from the COVID-19 virus

- Get your COVID-19 vaccine each season. It is the best way to prevent getting and spreading COVID-19. For more information, see [Facts About...COVID-19 Vaccines](#).
- Clean your hands often using soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- When you cough or sneeze, cover your mouth and nose with a tissue (and throw out) or your upper sleeve.
- Keep common surfaces and items clean and disinfected.
- Stay home if you are sick.

# What to do if you or your loved one has COVID-19

Stay home and self-isolate until all of the following apply:

- Your symptoms have been improving for 24 hours (or 48 if you had nausea, vomiting and/or diarrhea).
- You do not have a fever.
- You have not developed more symptoms.

Certain individuals who have symptoms of COVID-19 are able to get a COVID-19 test, such as those who live in long-term care homes, people who are 65 years of age and older, or those who have high-risk medical conditions. In general people are able to get a COVID-19 test if they are eligible to get treatment for COVID-19 (e.g. with Paxlovid).

Take additional precautions for up to 10 days after your symptoms started:

- Monitor for new or worsening symptoms.
- Wear a well fitted mask.
- Avoid non-essential activities where you need to take off your mask.
- Avoid non-essential visits to high-risk settings such as hospitals and long-term care homes.
- Avoid non-essential visits to anyone at higher risk of illness, such as seniors or immunocompromised individuals.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Open windows or doors if possible, even for a few minutes to improve air flow.

October 9, 2024

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