



# Coronavirus COVID-19

BC Centre for Disease Control | BC Ministry of Health



## HOW YOU CAN SLOW THE SPREAD OF COVID-19

Take care of others by taking care of yourself.

Wash your hands, don't touch your face, and stay home if you are sick.

Stay at Home and Physically Distance

Stay at home whenever you can. Maintain 2 meters distance from those outside of your household.

## COVID 19: How to self-isolate after travel when you live with other family members

April 4, 2020

This guide is designed to provide advice about how to self-isolate after arriving home from travelling when you live in a home with other family members or friends. It provides information about how you can care for yourself and protect those that you live with, especially those who are the most vulnerable.

As of March 25, 2020, it is mandatory that everyone arriving in British Columbia from outside of Canada self-isolate and monitor for symptoms for 14 days upon their arrival.

The symptoms of COVID-19, are similar to other respiratory illnesses, including the flu and common cold. They include cough, fever, sore throat and difficulty breathing. We know that older people and people with a weakened immune system or underlying medical conditions (like chronic heart, lung, or kidney diseases) are at higher risk of serious illness.

Self-isolation means staying home and avoiding situations where you could come in contact with others. You may have been exposed to the virus through your travels and are at risk for developing COVID-19 and passing it on to others. It can take up to 14 days for symptoms to develop, so it is important to self-isolate even if you are not showing symptoms.

### What to do if you live with others.

We know that it can be hard to self-isolate when you live with family members or friends. Whenever possible, try to stay in one room or area of the home by yourself and use a washroom that is not used by others. If this is not possible, it is important to consider who in your home is most at risk and keep them as safe as possible by staying away from them. Those at increased risk include seniors or adults or children with additional health concerns such as diabetes, heart disease or asthma, or who have a weakened immune system because of certain medications or illness such as cancer. For example, if you live with grandparents or parents who are seniors, do what you can to stay away from them.

If you cannot avoid living in the same space as others, you can do certain things to minimize the risk to other members of your family. While challenging in household with a large number of people, **whenever possible practice physical distancing by maintaining a 2-metre (or 6 feet) distance from others**, especially those who are older or at increased risk.



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If you have fever, a new cough, or are having difficulty breathing, call 8-1-1.

Non-medical inquiries 1-888-COVID19 (1888-268-4319)  
(ex. travel, physical distancing): or text 604-630-0300



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### What can you do to protect your family?

When you are living in a home with other people and have been ordered to self-isolate, especially around those who are more vulnerable to infection (such as elders, seniors, and those who have weakened immune systems), there are certain things you can do to protect them:

- Wash your hands regularly and frequently with plain soap and water (for at least 20 seconds). You can also use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol content. Antimicrobial soap is not required for COVID-19.
- Stay in your room as much as possible and keep 2 metres (6 feet) distance between you and others.
- Use a separate bathroom if you can. Clean the bathroom regularly with household cleaning products. Flush the toilet with the lid down.
- Wherever possible, use online tools to connect with others virtually
- Greet others with a smile and wave, as opposed to any direct person-to-person contact.
- It is ok to work from home.
- Only go outside for fresh air if you can stay in a private place like your yard or balcony
- Do not go to school, work or other public areas
- If more than one person in the home is sick with the same illness, they can share a room.
- Stay and sleep in a room with good airflow that is away from others. For example, open a window to let the air circulate.
- Ensure you use a separate towel, kept away from others.
- Ask friends or relatives if you require help with buying groceries, other shopping or picking up medication. Alternatively, you can order groceries and medication by phone or online.
- Do not have visitors in your home except if they are providing care or delivering goods and supplies, and in that case, maintain a distance of 2 metres. Ask those dropping off groceries and supplies to leave them at the front door.
- Continue self-monitoring for symptoms. If you develop cough or fever and symptoms worsen, call and report to 811. If you are having trouble breathing, call 911.
- Do not use public transportation
- Cover your mouth and nose with your elbow when coughing or sneezing and avoid others who are unwell. Cough into your elbow or use a tissue to avoid coughing or sneezing into either your hands or into the air. Dispose of used tissues right away into a trash bin and immediately wash your hands.
- Wash your clothes as you would normally in the laundry, using the hottest water indicated on the washing instructions. Dry clothes well and do not wash or fold other people's laundry.



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- If you smoke, try to quit ([www.quitnow.ca](http://www.quitnow.ca)), and do not allow others to smoke in the house or car.

In addition to taking individual precautions yourself to protect those you live with, especially those who may be more at risk, there are other things that you or other members of your household can do:

- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces such as doorknobs, countertops, bathrooms and other surfaces at least once a day. Regular household cleaning products are effective at eliminating COVID-19. Follow the directions on the product label. Remember that regular household cleaners are effective against COVID-19:
  - **Cleaning** physically removes, rather than kills, viruses and bacteria. It is done with water, detergents, and steady friction from a cleaning cloth.
  - **Disinfection** kills viruses and bacteria and is only applied to objects; never on the human body.
- Wash hard surfaces such as taps, counters, doorknobs, telephones and railings with a disinfectant or household cleaner, ideally multiple times per day
- Keep your personal items (i.e., toothbrush, cups, cell phones, tablets or laptops) separate from those belonging to others.
- Empty garbage frequently and wash your hands immediately afterwards.
- Do not share food, drinks or cigarettes or any other items that are put in the mouth.

## What if I am self-isolating and need to cook or prepare food for my household?

If you have returned from travel and are under self-isolation, you should not prepare food for other members of your household.

- Either cook and prepare food only for yourself or have someone else prepare food for you and bring it to you in a separate room.
- Do not share dishes, drinking glasses, cups, eating utensils, towels, bedding or other items with an individual who is self-isolating or who has developed any respiratory symptoms. If this is unavoidable, due to space issues, ensure that anything being shared is washed with soap and hot water between uses.

## What if I am self-isolating and either I or someone in my household gets sick?

If you have returned from travel and are under self-isolation, and either you or someone in your house gets sick, there are additional steps you must take to protect yourself and those around you.

- If possible, have only one person in your household care for those who are sick to limit the number of people exposed.
- Sick people will probably feel very tired and weak. Allow them to rest.
- Water, juices, clear broths and soups will replace lost fluids, especially if there is a fever.



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- If possible, you should not be a caregiver for your household if you are pregnant or have pre-existing conditions, such as diabetes, chronic lung, kidney, or heart disease.

Use the online [BC COVID-19 Self-Assessment Tool](#) to help determine if you need further assessment or testing for COVID-19. If you cannot use the online tool, call HealthLink BC at 8-1-1 (toll-free) or 7-1-1 (deaf & hard of hearing), 24-hours a day/seven days a week. You can complete this assessment for yourself, or on behalf of someone else, if they are unable to.

For more information on self-isolation requirements following travel, go to the Government of Canada's website at: <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/prevention-risks.html?topic=tilelink#self>



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