

# COVID-19 SELF-ISOLATION ADVICE

**SELF-ISOLATION MEANS STAYING HOME, KEEPING YOUR DISTANCE FROM OTHER PEOPLE AND ONLY LEAVING HOME FOR EMERGENCY MEDICAL REASONS**

**PLEASE FOLLOW THE INSTRUCTIONS BELOW TO REDUCE THE SPREAD OF COVID-19**

**You must** self-isolate if you have:

- COVID-19 or COVID-19 symptoms
- Been in close contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19
- Travelled outside of Canada in the last 14 days
- Been tested due to a potential exposure to someone with COVID-19
- Received a notification from the COVID-19 alert app
- For further direction on assessment and testing in children with symptoms, refer to the [COVID-19 School and Child Care Screening](#) tool. Remember that symptoms of COVID-19 can take up to 14 days to appear.
- If someone in your home is positive for COVID-19, all members of the family/household should isolate, avoid going out and follow the public health recommendations to avoid transmitting COVID-19 within the household
- If someone in your home has symptoms but is not a confirmed case of COVID-19, family/household members can go to work or school if they do not have symptoms themselves. The family/household member with symptoms should be self-isolated, away from others
- If someone in your home is awaiting test results, family/household members can go to work/school if they do not have any symptoms. The individual with symptoms and/or awaiting results should be self-isolated, away from others

**Seek assessment and testing if you have:**

- Been in close contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19, or
- New or worsening symptoms such as: fever, cough, shortness of breath, sore throat or difficulty swallowing, new smell or taste disorder(s), nausea/vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal pain, runny nose or nasal congestion (unrelated to seasonal allergies, post-nasal drip, etc.)

**In York Region, Assessment Centres are operated by the local hospitals:**

- [Mackenzie Health](#)
- [Markham Stouffville Hospital](#)
- [Southlake Regional Health Centre](#)

**If you are a close contact, continue to self-isolate for 14 days from your last contact with someone who has COVID-19.** If you develop symptoms, get in touch with everyone you have been in close contact with from 48 hours before your symptoms started and while you had symptoms and ask them to immediately self-isolate for 14 days.

# How long do I self-isolate if I have tested positive?

## **Self-isolate for 10 days if you have:**

- Tested positive for COVID-19 and your symptoms have remained mild to moderate (i.e., you did not need to go to the hospital for care)

**You can discontinue isolation after 10 days from symptom onset (or 10 days from the positive test collection date if you never had symptoms), provided you have no fever (without the use of fever-reducing medications) and symptoms are improving for at least 24 hours. Self-isolate for 20 days if you have:**

- Tested positive for COVID-19 and were hospitalized in an Intensive Care Unit (ICU) with severe COVID-19 illness or have a severe immune compromise
  - Examples of severe immune compromise include cancer chemotherapy, untreated HIV infection, taking prednisone for an extended period of time and taking other immune suppressive medications
- You can discontinue isolation after 20 days from symptom onset (or 20 days from positive test collection date if never had symptoms), provided you have no fever (without the use of fever-reducing medications) and symptoms are improving for at least 24 hours

For more details, refer to [Tested! Now What?](#)

## How do I self-isolate?

### **Stay home except when seeking urgent medical care**

- Do not go to work or school
- Do not go out for errands: have groceries delivered or have a friend or neighbor help with essentials
- Reschedule all non-urgent medical appointments
- Do not leave your home to interact with other people (e.g., no walking or meeting up outside)
- If you require medical attention, drive yourself and use a private vehicle for transport, if possible
  - Do not use public transportation
  - If you get a ride from a friend, family member or ride share, follow [carpooling advice](#) to reduce the risk of transmission
- If you call 911 for an ambulance, tell the operator you are self-isolating for COVID-19

### **Monitor your symptoms**

- Monitor yourself for new [symptoms or signs](#) of COVID-19
  - Take and record your temperature daily to monitor for fever (temperature of 37.8°C/100°F or higher)
  - If you have used acetaminophen (e.g., Tylenol) or ibuprofen (e.g., Advil, Motrin), take your temperature four hours after using these medications as they mask a fever

### **Separate yourself from other people in your home**

- Stay in a separate room, away from other people in your home as much as possible
  - Children self-isolating should avoid playing with siblings
- Use a separate washroom, if possible
- Wear a [surgical/procedural mask](#) when in the same room as other household or family members
- Do not have visitors to your home
- Avoid sharing with others any personal items that can come into contact with saliva, such as toothbrushes, eating utensils, cups/bottles, towels, bedding

## **Wear a surgical mask**

- Wear a [surgical/procedural mask](#) when you are within 2-metres of other people (in your home) or if leaving your home to seek medical attention
- If you cannot wear a mask, others should wear a surgical/procedural mask when they are around you
- If your mask becomes wet or dirty with secretions, change the mask immediately
- Wash your hands after removing a dirty mask and before putting on a clean mask

## **Clean your hands**

- Wash your hands thoroughly and often for at least 15 seconds, including between your fingers, under your fingernails and your wrists. Dry your hands with a disposable paper towel. If you use cloth towels, do not share with others and replace when wet
- If hands are not visibly dirty, an alcohol-based hand sanitizer can be used to clean your hands
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth with unwashed hands

## **Cover your coughs and sneezes**

- Cover your cough or sneeze using a tissue, being sure to cover your mouth and nose. Throw the tissue into a garbage lined with a plastic bag and wash your hands immediately with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer
- If you don't have tissues, cough or sneeze into your elbow or sleeve

## **Cleaning and disinfecting within your home**

- [Clean and disinfect](#) all frequently touched surfaces in your home, including bathroom and toilet surfaces, at least once a day and when contaminated with respiratory secretions
- Clean with detergent (soap) and water and then disinfect with an over-the-counter disinfectant
- Clean and disinfect thermometers after each use

## **Frequently asked questions**

### **Does our whole family/household self-isolate if one of us is COVID-19 positive?**

- It is difficult to avoid transmission of COVID-19 within a family or household unit
- If someone in your home is positive for COVID-19, all members of the family/household should isolate, avoid going out and follow the recommendations outlined above as strictly as possible to avoid transmitting COVID-19 to each other
- Family/household members who are primary caregivers (i.e., parents of young children) and other household members who continued to be close contacts of the COVID-19 positive person should self-isolate for an additional 14 days after the initial isolation period for the case as they are considered close contacts of the case up until the last day of isolation (i.e., 10 days initial case isolation + 14 days close contact isolation = 24 days total isolation)

### **Does our whole family/household self-isolate if one of us has symptoms but is not a confirmed case of COVID-19?**

- Family/household members can go to work or school if they do not have symptoms themselves. The family/household member with symptoms should be self-isolated, away from others
- If someone in your home is awaiting test results, family/household members can go to work/school if they do not have any symptoms. The family/household member with symptoms, awaiting results should be self-isolated, away from others

- Consider isolating as a whole family/household if you are concerned that you may contribute to further spread of COVID-19, e.g., it is not possible to adequately isolate your symptomatic family member due to age or needs or you work in an environment with vulnerable populations, etc.

### **What do we do if other members of your household develop respiratory symptoms?**

- If other members of your household start to have respiratory symptoms have them seek assessment and testing at a [COVID-19 Assessment Centre](#) or call York Region Public Health 1-800-361-5653

### **My child is sick but I do not want to get them tested. How long do they need to isolate?**

- If your child used the [COVID-19 School and Child Care Screening Tool](#) and was advised to isolate and seek assessment, but you do not wish to get them tested or cannot access testing at this time, your child must remain self-isolated for the time recommended by the screening tool. Keep them as separate as possible from other household members. Household members without symptoms may go to school/child care/work (i.e., do not need to self-isolate if they are well).

### **Questions? Contact York Region Public Health**

If you have any questions about self-isolation or COVID-19, call York Region Public Health's Health Connection line at **1-800-361-5653** from Monday to Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.