

# Isolation for Individuals with Symptoms and/or Waiting for COVID-19 Test Results



**Note:** This fact sheet is intended for individuals with a positive COVID-19 test result, individuals awaiting test results (whether or not they have symptoms or exposure) and individuals with COVID-19 symptoms who have not been tested.

Most people who get COVID-19 will have mild symptoms, but for some this virus can cause serious illness and even death. Most people who get sick with COVID-19 can recover at home, but need to isolate and monitor their symptoms. Care at home can help stop the spread of COVID-19 and help ensure that health care resources are available to those with severe COVID-19 symptoms requiring hospitalization. When isolating at home, all your household members will be considered close contacts and will need to self-isolate for 14 days from their last contact with you. Unless you are able to isolate in a separate suite, household members may need to self-isolate for up to 24 days. To minimize this impact, speak to your public health nurse about alternative isolation options.

## Do I need to isolate and for how long? If you:

- **have tested positive for COVID-19 and are well enough to recover at home.** Isolate for at least 10 days from the time your symptoms started. During this time, you will receive regular calls from a combination of public health officials and an automated call system to ask about your temperature and your symptoms. A public health official will tell you when you can stop isolating.
- **have been tested and are waiting for your test results.** Isolate at home while you are waiting to get your test results. If your COVID-19 test results are negative, but you have symptoms, and have travelled or been exposed to a case, you will need to continue to self-isolate (quarantine) for the entire 14 days and until you have been symptom free for 24 hours. If your COVID-19 test results are negative and you have not travelled or been exposed to a case, you need to isolate until you have been symptom free for 24 hours. If your COVID-19 test results are positive, you must continue to isolate and a public health official will call you.
- **have cold or flu-like symptoms but have not been exposed to COVID-19 through travel or contact with a case.** People with a new onset, or worsening, of any one symptom listed in column A or any two or more symptoms listed in column B (see table below), should get tested for COVID-19. If you choose not to get tested, you will need to isolate for at least 10 days at home. You can stop isolating after 10 days, provided you have been symptom free for 24 hours. If you do get tested and your COVID-19 test results are negative, you need to isolate until you have been symptom free for 24 hours. If your COVID-19 test results are positive, you must continue to isolate and a public health official will call you.

A	B
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Fever / chills</li><li>• Cough</li><li>• Sore throat / hoarse voice</li><li>• Difficulty breathing</li><li>• Loss of taste or smell</li><li>• Vomiting or diarrhea for more than 24 hours</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Runny nose</li><li>• Muscle aches</li><li>• Fatigue</li><li>• Pink eye (conjunctivitis)</li><li>• Headache</li><li>• Skin rash of unknown cause</li><li>• Poor feeding, if an infant</li><li>• Nausea or loss of appetite</li></ul>

## How will I find out about my test results?

Results can be accessed securely online at <https://sharedhealthmb.ca/covid19/test-results/>. You may receive a text message to let you know that your test result is available on the portal. The results will not be included in the text. If your test results come back positive for COVID-19, public health officials will also contact you directly.

Timelines for COVID-19 test results may vary due to current testing volumes and the location where you were tested. It may take several days for COVID-19 test results to become available. You should continue to isolate until you receive your test results.

If you do not have a Manitoba Health Family Registration Card, are not a resident of Manitoba, or you are unable to access your test results, you can call the COVID Line at Health Links – Info Santé at **204-788-8200** or toll free at **1-888-315-9257**.

If you tested positive for COVID-19 you will receive regular calls from public health officials, including regional public health, the Public Health COVID-19 Contact Center, the Canadian Red Cross, 24/7 In Touch, or other partners as part of your ongoing monitoring. You may also be contacted using automated calls or SMS text messages. You will be asked important questions about isolation, your symptoms and other public health guidelines in a question and answer format, with answers provided by keypad number options.

You will continue to receive regular calls until you are symptom free and your case is closed.

## Why is Manitoba using auto-dialer calls and SMS text messages to notify cases of their results?

With increased levels of COVID-19 testing and close contacts, public health officials may contact you with automated calls or SMS text messaging to provide you with automatic notices related to your public health file. This will allow public health officials to provide you with important information quickly. You will still be able to speak with a public health nurse if you wish to do so.

Communication from public health officials by SMS text messages or an automated calls, may result in notices being displayed on your phone's screen (depending on your text preview settings). You may wish to consider adjusting your phone settings to meet your display preferences. Each individual case will receive a dedicated call or text. This could mean that multiple calls or texts are delivered to a single number provided for a family unit. We recommend that you provide a personal mobile phone number at the testing site to receive the text messages or calls.

Automated calls will be made to the number provided at the time of testing and occur between 9:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m. seven days a week. To receive them you must remove any anonymous call-blocking settings on your phone.

Note that staff involved with case and contact management will never ask for personal information, such as banking information, social insurance numbers, credit card numbers, passport numbers, or other non-health related data.

More information on case and contact management, including automated calls, SMS text messages and privacy concerns can be found at <https://manitoba.ca/covid19/testing/monitoring/index.html>.

## What does isolation mean?

Isolation requires staying at home and avoiding contact with other people (including household members) to prevent spreading the disease to others in your home and your community. This means confining your activities to your home and outdoor property. If you live in a condo or multi-dwelling complex, you must stay in your suite. You may use your private balcony as long as it is two metres (six feet) away from your neighbour's balcony. Until you are finished your isolation, do not leave home to go to work, school or other public places (e.g., don't go for curbside pickup from stores and restaurants, places of worship), unless you require emergency or urgent medical care.

While at home, stay in your own room or on a separate floor from other members of your household. If possible, use a separate bathroom. If you must share a bathroom, it should be cleaned/disinfected frequently. If you need to leave your room or floor, wear a medical mask and stay at least two metres (six feet) away from other members of your household. You should also avoid contact with pets that live in your home. For information about living with or caring for a household member with COVID-19, [click here](#).

You must not have any visitors over to your home during this time. If you live alone, arrange to have groceries and supplies dropped off at your door to minimize contact with others. Cancel or notify any service providers who regularly come into your home that a household member is sick, has COVID-19, or is waiting test results. This includes home care workers, occupational therapists, physiotherapists, social workers, etc. They will discuss how best to provide care during this time.

## How do I self-monitor my symptoms?

Anyone who is isolating should also be monitoring their health for any new or more severe symptoms. This means:

- Identifying any new or worsening symptoms, including fever, cough, headache, runny nose, sore throat, shortness of breath or breathing difficulties.
- Taking your temperature twice a day (morning and night), using an oral (mouth) digital thermometer. It is important to get an accurate temperature reading. Do not eat, drink, smoke or chew gum for 30 minutes prior to taking your temperature. Wait at least 4 hours after you have taken acetaminophen (Tylenol®) or Ibuprofen (Advil®).
- Using the [Temperature Self-Monitoring Form](#) to record your temperature, and any other symptoms you may experience during the isolation period.

## What should I do if my symptoms get worse?

If you start to feel worse during your isolation period, call Health Links – Info Santé at **204-788-8200** or **1-888-315-9257**). A nurse will assist you in determining whether or not you need a medical assessment.

Call 911 if the persons symptoms are severe (i.e. new or severe chest pain, trouble breathing, bluish lips or face, sudden confusion, symptoms of stroke such as leg or arm weakness, numbness, slurred speech or facial drooping).

It is important to seek medical attention early to get the care you need.

## What can I do to care for myself while 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.
- Isolating can be stressful and you may feel lonely. Stay connected with family or friends by phone, email, social media or other technologies.

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

When you are sick, there are a variety of precautions you should take to protect others. You should:

### Clean your hands regularly

Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 15 seconds or use alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60 per cent alcohol:

- Before and after preparing food (avoid preparing food for others)
- Before eating
- After using the toilet
- After touching shared household items (e.g., dishes, towels, etc.)
- Before and after using a face mask
- After disposing of waste (e.g. a tissue) or handling contaminated laundry and whenever hands look dirty

### Cover your coughs and sneezes

- Cough or sneeze into your sleeve or a tissue.
- Throw used tissues in the garbage and immediately wash your hands, or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

### Avoid sharing household and personal items

- Do not share dishes, drinking glasses, cups, eating utensils, towels, bedding or other items.
- Do not share cigarettes or other items that are put in the mouth.

### Keep your environment clean

- Clean and disinfect high touch areas (toilets, taps, light switches, doorknobs, TVs, phones, electronics and TV remotes) at least twice daily, or as needed.
- Use store bought disinfectant. If not available, use a diluted bleach solution (20 ml [four teaspoons] bleach for every litre of water) and allow the surface to remain wet for one minute before scrubbing.
- Use hot water when operating the dishwasher or washing machine. **Make sure your home has good airflow**
- Open the window, 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 people who are 60 years of age and older, people with chronic health conditions or weakened immune systems (e.g., people undergoing cancer treatment).

Speak to your public health official or contact Health Links – Info Santé if you live with someone at higher risk of developing severe COVID-19 symptoms, or if isolating in the home will be difficult. Public health officials can assist with finding alternative accommodations for yourself, or potentially those at higher risk, to reduce the risk to family and household members.

If the person with COVID-19 starts to feel worse or has any of the below symptoms:

- new or severe chest pain
- trouble breathing
- bluish lips or face
- sudden confusion
- symptoms of stroke, such as leg or arm weakness, numbness, slurred speech, or facial drooping

Call 911.

### For more information about COVID-19:

#### Call:

- Health Links – Info Santé at **204-788-8200** or **1-888-315-9257**

#### Or visit:

- Caring for Someone with COVID-19 in the home – [www.manitoba.ca/covid19/resources/index.html#factsheets](http://www.manitoba.ca/covid19/resources/index.html#factsheets)
- Manitoba government's COVID-19 website – [www.manitoba.ca/covid19/](http://www.manitoba.ca/covid19/)
- Government of Canada's COVID-19 website – [www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/coronavirus-disease-covid-19.html](http://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/coronavirus-disease-covid-19.html)