Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

Reduce Your Risk from COVID-19

This fact sheet is intended for people at greater risk of serious illness from COVID-19, such as older adults and people with chronic medical conditions. It will help you determine what you can do to decrease your risk of exposure to COVID-19.

Who is at increased risk?

Risk for hospitalization or death from COVID-19 increases with:

- Age, as you get older the risk increases especially in older adults;

- Having a chronic medical condition including obesity, diabetes, lung/heart/kidney/liver diseases, stroke, high blood pressure, and conditions that weaken the immune system
(e.g., some cancers, untreated HIV/AIDS);

- Taking medications that weaken the immune system (e.g., chemotherapy, oral steroid medications).

Limit the number of people you are physically near

- Aside from those you live with:
  - Limit the number of people you are near;
  - Stay as far apart as possible from people (at least 2 metres/6 feet apart).
- Stay in touch with friends and family through phone, video chats, or text whenever possible.
- Work from home if possible.
- See your health care providers virtually (e.g., doctors, physiotherapists) whenever possible.

Avoid closed indoor spaces and crowded places

- Visit with your friends and family outdoors whenever possible.
- If you must meet indoors, open windows and doors to improve ventilation whenever possible.
- Avoid crowded stores and other indoor spaces if possible. Choose less busy times to go shopping, and use delivery services or ask others to pick-up food and supplies for you.
- Limit the use of public transportation, taxis and rideshares. If you must use these forms of transportation, choose less busy times where possible, practice physical distancing, wear a mask and wash hands frequently. If you must take a taxi or rideshare, wear a mask, ensure the driver wears a mask, sit in the back and open the window.

Wear a mask and ensure those near you do too

- Wear a non-medical mask to help you from spreading infection to others.

- Wear a mask when you are indoors with people outside of your household and ensure those near you do too (assuming that you know them and it is safe to discuss mask use with them).

- Wear a mask whenever you are outdoors within 2 metres/6 feet of people outside of your household and ensure those near you do too.

Clean your hands frequently

- Wash hands often with soap and water. Don't share hand towels.

- Carry and use an alcohol-based hand rub (60% - 90% alcohol) if soap and water are not available.

- Clean your hands whenever you touch objects or surfaces touched by others, and also if you touch another person. Avoid touching your face, and if you need to, clean your hands first.

Other strategies to help stay healthy

- Get your influenza vaccine when available to protect you from influenza virus.

- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces in your house (e.g. door knobs, light switches).

- If you develop symptoms consistent with COVID-19, contact your health care provider or visit an assessment centre.

- If you have concerns about your or a loved one's mental health, seek help.

Resources

- Public Health Agency of Canada: Vulnerable Populations and COVID-19

- The Canadian Coalition for Seniors' Mental Health:

    - Tips for Battling Anxiety During this Public Health Situation

    - Things to Do While Physical Distancing

- CATIE: Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19), HIV and Hepatitis C: What You Need to Know

- Ministry of Health: Resources for Ontarians Experiencing Mental Health and Addictions Issues During the Pandemic

- Canadian Cancer Society: Cancer and COVID-19

- About Kids Health: Information for Parents of Immunocompromised Children and Children with Chronic Medical Conditions

- Public Health Ontario: Public Resources

Learn about the virus

To learn more and access up-to-date information on COVID-19 visit the Ontario Ministry of Health's website at ontario.ca/coronavirus.

For more information please contact: _____

The information in this document is current as of November 18, 2020

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