

COVID-19

Coronavirus disease

Public Health Factsheet
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Manitoba 

Coronaviruses (CoV) are a large family of viruses that cause illnesses ranging from the common cold to more severe diseases. COVID-19 is an infectious disease caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus, a virus in the coronavirus family. Most people infected with the virus will experience mild to moderate respiratory illness, but the virus can affect different people in different ways. Some will become seriously ill and require medical attention.

Vaccines

Vaccines play an important role in minimizing the impact of COVID-19 in the population, including significantly lowering the risk of severe outcomes, such as hospitalizations and death. Vaccines are the best defense against the virus and individuals are encouraged to get vaccinated as soon as they are eligible, and ensure they receive all the doses recommended for the best protection. For more information on the COVID-19 vaccines, see www.gov.mb.ca/covid19/vaccine/index.html.

Treatment

Although not a substitute for vaccine, treatments for COVID-19 are available and provide further protection for individuals who are at higher risk of severe disease, including those who have been vaccinated. Treatment is only effective in the very early phases of infection so early testing after symptoms start is important. Please visit manitoba.ca/covid19/treatment/index.html, call Health Links – Info Santé (204-788-8200 or 1-888-315-9257), or talk to your health care provider for more information and to find out if you are eligible.

Testing for COVID-19

Testing for COVID-19 is recommended when a positive or negative result will inform decisions about your treatment or care or for certain workplace settings. To determine if you are eligible for testing, please visit www.gov.mb.ca/covid19/testing/testing-eligibility.html.

If you have symptoms of COVID-19, are not eligible for PCR testing but have access to rapid antigen tests, you can test yourself. If you have a negative result, do not assume you are negative for COVID-19. It is recommended you take a second test 24 hours after your first and if available, a third test 24 hours after the second. For more information on rapid antigen tests and how to use them, see: www.gov.mb.ca/covid19/testing/rat.html.

If all tests are negative you can resume your regular activities as long as you have no fever and your symptoms have been improving for 24 hours. If you have been advised to self-isolate (quarantine), you are still required to complete your self-isolation (quarantine) period.

PCR test results can be accessed securely online at <https://sharedhealthmb.ca/covid19/test-results/>. Timelines for COVID-19 test results may vary due to testing volumes and the location where you were tested. 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, call Health Links – Info Santé at 204-788-8200 or toll free at 1-888-315-9257.

If you are not tested and have symptoms of COVID-19, you should assume you have COVID-19 and follow the isolation guidance for COVID-19 cases.

What are COVID-19 symptoms?

Symptoms may take up to 14 days to appear after exposure to COVID-19. Some of the more commonly reported symptoms include:

- Fever/Chills
- Cough
- Sore throat/hoarse voice
- Difficulty breathing
- Loss of taste or smell
- Vomiting or diarrhea for more than 24 hours
- Runny nose
- Muscle aches
- Fatigue
- Pink eye (conjunctivitis)
- Headache
- Skin rash of unknown cause
- Nausea or loss of appetite
- Poor feeding in an infant

Isolation and caring for yourself at home

Isolation can reduce the spread of COVID-19, including its variants, in your household and community. It is important to follow the advice of your local public health authority about when and how to isolate.

- **You should isolate when you test positive** on a PCR test, on a rapid antigen test, or if you have symptoms without testing. You should **isolate for five days after your symptoms start**, and until you have no fever and your other symptoms have improved over the past 24 hours. If you don't have symptoms and test positive, you should **isolate for five days after your test date**.

You should also **avoid non-essential visits to high-risk settings** (e.g. personal care homes, health care facilities, etc.) and non-essential contact with individuals at high risk of severe outcomes for 10 days after your symptoms started, or if you don't develop symptoms, for 10 days after your test date. As well, you should **wear a well-made, well-fitted mask during this 10 day period** if or when you have contact with other people. For information on how to choose, use and care for a mask please visit manitoba.ca/covid19/prevention-assessing-risk.html.

Isolation means:

- staying at home and avoiding contact with other people (including household members)
- cleaning 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
- cover your coughs and sneezes
- not leaving home to go to work, school or other public places unless you require emergency or urgent medical care
- staying in your own room or on a separate floor from other members of your household. Avoid sharing personal and household items. If possible, use a separate bathroom. If you must share a bathroom, it should be cleaned and disinfected frequently.
- wearing a well-made, well-fitting mask and stay at least two metres (six feet) away from other members of your household, if you need to leave your room or floor
- avoiding contact with pets that live in your home.
- not allowing 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.

- cancelling or notifying 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.
- resting, eating nutritious food, and drinking plenty of clear fluids (e.g., water).
- taking acetaminophen (Tylenol®) or ibuprofen (Advil®) for fever and soreness.

Illness can be stressful if you live alone. Stay connected with family or friends by phone, email, social media or other technologies.

For information about living with or caring for a household member with COVID-19 see: www.manitoba.ca/covid19/updates/resources.html#factsheets.

NOTE: If you need to leave your home when you are sick, you should wear a well-fitting, well-made mask when out in the community.

What about my household members or other close contacts?

If you have symptoms or test positive, you are no longer required to notify your close contacts, and close contacts are not routinely required to self-isolate (quarantine), except where advised by public health in high risk situations, such as outbreaks, or in health care facilities. If you live in a First Nation community, check with your community for further guidance.

However, **all household members should self-monitor for symptoms of COVID-19** for 14 days following exposure. Your household contacts need to be very cautious while a case or symptomatic individual is isolating, and avoid any non-essential visits to high-risk settings or non-essential contact with individuals at high risk for severe disease from COVID-19. If you live with a health care worker they should check with their occupational health on any additional requirements before returning to work.

If any household contacts develop symptoms, they should isolate immediately and check the online COVID-19 Screening Tool <https://sharedhealthmb.ca/covid19/screening-tool/> to determine if testing is recommended for them.

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. Higher risk groups may 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). Isolate as much as possible from the high-risk individual, if they develop symptoms contact Health Links – Info Santé (204-788-8200 or 1-888-315-9257) to determine eligibility for testing and treatment.

If you have any questions about isolation, please visit: <https://www.gov.mb.ca/covid19/fundamentals/self-isolation.html>

What is self-isolation (quarantine)?

Self-isolation (quarantine) is the period of time in which individuals who may have been exposed to COVID-19 are recommended to stay away from others to limit further spread. This may include close contacts, as well as people who have been exposed through travel.

Self-isolation (quarantine) is no longer routinely recommended by public health, however you may be required to self-isolate (quarantine) for travel reasons or in situations where public health officials implement stricter requirements to reduce the spread of the virus, such as an outbreak or in health care facilities.

When self-isolating (quarantining) you should self-monitor for symptoms, and if any develop continue to isolate and check the online COVID-19 Screening Tool <https://sharedhealthmb.ca/covid19/screening-tool/> to determine if testing is recommended for you.

NOTE: individuals who have travelled internationally, must follow Federal testing and isolation/ self-isolation (quarantine) requirements.

When should I be worried about my symptoms?

If you experience any new or worsening symptoms (including fever, cough, headache, shortness of breath or breathing difficulties) or if you start to feel worse during your isolation period, call Health Links – Info Santé at 204-788-8200 or 1-888-315-9257).

Call 911 if your 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.

How to stop the spread of COVID-19?

- Get vaccinated.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- 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.
- Cover your coughs and sneezes.
- Keep your environment clean, and make sure your home has good airflow.
- Assess your personal risk to see if there are additional precautions, such as physical distancing and masking, that could be beneficial. For more information on assessing risk, see: manitoba.ca/covid19/prevention-assessing-risk.html.

NOTE: In times of increased community transmission and case numbers, public health officials may implement stricter requirements to reduce the spread of the virus. These additional measures may apply regionally or provincially. The online COVID-19 Screening Tool (<https://sharedhealthmb.ca/covid19/screening-tool/>) will provide guidance and direction on any new requirements.

For more information about COVID-19:

- Health Links – Info Santé at **204-788-8200** or **1-888-315-9257**
- Manitoba government's COVID-19 website – manitoba.ca/covid19/
- Government of Canada's COVID-19 website – canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/coronavirus-disease-covid-19.html
- World Health Organization website – <https://www.who.int/>