

# Create a plan for COVID-19 for you or someone you are caring for

We know COVID-19 is here to stay. As restrictions ease, the virus will make its way across the region.

## There are things you can do to be COVID-safe



### Get vaccinated

Protect you and your community.



### Practise good hygiene

Regularly and thoroughly wash your hands.



### Maintain physical distancing,

Keep at least 1.5 metres away from others.



### Carry & Wear a Face Mask

Carry a face mask when you leave home unless you have a lawful reason not to.

Wear a face mask when required, unless a lawful exception applies. It is strongly recommended you wear one whenever you cannot keep 1.5 metres distance from others.

Some of us will still get COVID-19 after being vaccinated. If you are infected with, or have been exposed to the virus, you will be told to self-isolate. You will have to stay home, with no visitors, for the duration of your isolation period unless it is unsafe to do so.

Most people who are vaccinated, if they do get COVID-19, will either have no symptoms or have mild symptoms, however, older people and people with chronic illnesses are at a higher risk of becoming unwell.

This information sheet offers some guidance to help you create a plan if you or someone you live with gets COVID-19.<sup>1</sup> You need to know where to go and what to do should you get COVID-19.

Talk over your plan with your doctor and your family.

<sup>1</sup>These guidelines are based on the following advice:

World Health Organisation 2021 Coronavirus 2019 Advice for the public; AARP 2020 Preparedness for Caregivers during COVID19; HelpAge International 2020 COVID-19: Guidance and advice for older people

## Make a list of your contacts

Put together a list of your medical contacts, people in your family or friend networks, and the contact person from the services in your community that will support you at home.

### Health Information

- Doctor
- Health Service/hospital
- Pharmacist
- List of medications
- Emergency number

### Support Network

- Family members and Next-of-kin
- Friends
- Neighbours

### Consider who will help you by:

- Buying food
- Delivering meals
- Picking up the mail
- Picking up medicines
- Tasks around the house
- Helping manage your farm, work or volunteer roles
- Caring for pets or animals
- Getting to your doctor or hospital
- Supporting anyone you regularly visit or provide care

# Be prepared

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## 1. What matters

You cannot have visitors into your home during quarantine. Think about the food and basic supplies you might need when you are in quarantine at home.

**If possible, have a two-week supply of:**

- Food, water, fire wood, pet food, stock feed.
- Medical masks, disinfectants, cleaners.

Know what matters to you, your priorities, goals and health preferences.

How do you want to spend your time in quarantine? What is most important to you at the moment? What can you do to make each day in quarantine a great day? What plans did you have that you will need to change? What might concern you most?

This is a good time to ensure your Advanced Care Plan is in order.

## 2. Medications

It is important that even if you are unwell, you continue to take any other medication you have been given by your doctor for other illnesses or health issues. Make sure you have enough of your medicines. If possible, have an extra two-weeks supply of essential medications on hand.

Don't forget over-the-counter medications like cough suppressants and fever reducing drugs like Panadol.

## 3. Mobility

Stay physically active. Find exercises that can be done at home now. Many virtual and online physical activity and health promotion programs are available and don't require any equipment.

## 4. Mental wellbeing

**Stay connected. Being isolated again is a huge issue, especially when you have COVID-19, or are caring for someone with COVID-19.**

- Set up a communications plan with your support network
- Know what technology you will need to have access to – FaceTime, Zoom, smart speakers, or simply a phone and text.
- If you have a window that faces the street, pull up a chair so you can see people outside.
- Organise times for different people to contact you.

**Accept help from others.**

- Remain open to accepting the kindness and support from family members, friends, health care providers, local neighbourhood house, and social service agencies

**Plan your day. Keep up with daily routines like getting out of bed at your regular time, getting dressed and your hobbies or small activities.**

- Plan time for online classes, calls with friends, reading or doing puzzles.
- If you live in your own home with private access to the garden or shed, you can go outside to garden or do home repairs. Activities can give meaning to the days.
- Think of others. Regularly reach out to others who may need to hear a friendly voice on the phone.

Rest and fluids are essential.

For people with living with dementia or significant health conditions, consider having the primary caregiver self-isolate with the person. Make sure to have a back-up plan should this become unsafe or caregiver gets ill.

If the behaviour of your partner or family member makes you feel unsafe – it is not okay. You have the right to feel safe, access medical support, and communicate with friends and family. If this is the case for you, you are permitted to leave home to seek safety.

You are permitted to leave home in an emergency. Wear a mask when you leave.

# Caring for someone with COVID-19

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## Isolate the sick person

- Prepare a separate room or an isolated space.
- Keep distant from others.
- Keep the room well ventilated and open windows frequently.

## Reduce contact with the virus

- Identify one household member to be the contact person who is not at high risk and has the fewest contacts with people outside.
- No visitors are allowed during this time.
- Wear a medical mask if in the same room as the sick person. Change the mask every four hours.
- Use separate dishes, cups, eating utensils, bedding and towels from the sick person. Wear gloves when handling infectious items.
- Have a system for disposing of infectious tissues and masks.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces.

## Provide care

- Monitor the sick person's symptoms regularly.
- Pay special attention if the person is at high risk for serious illness.
- Ensure the sick person rests and stays hydrated.
- If there are upcoming routine medical appointments, reschedule those or switch to a virtual visit.

## Danger signs

**Call your healthcare provider immediately if you experience or see any of these danger signs**

- Difficulty breathing
- Loss of speech or mobility
- Confusion
- Chest pain

## Where can I go for medical help?

Medical assistance will be provided to help with the symptoms of COVID-19 if you become unwell. Most people who catch COVID-19 will recover with medical support.

If you feel unwell, do not panic or hide your condition. Seek medical help.

If you become seriously unwell with COVID-19 you will need hospital treatment.

# COVID-19 symptoms

## Serious COVID-19 symptoms require immediate medical care

- If you develop any of these symptoms, call your healthcare provider or health facility and seek medical care immediately.
- This is not an exhaustive list. There are the most common symptoms of serious illness, but you can get very sick with other symptoms - if you have any questions, call for help immediately.



**Shortness of breath/difficulty breathing**



**Loss of speech or mobility or confusion**



**Chest Pain**

## Most common symptoms



**Fever**



**Cough**



**Tiredness**



**Loss of taste or smell**

## Less common symptoms



**Sore throat**



**Headache**



**Aches and pains**



**Diarrhea**



**A rash on the skin or discoloration or fingers or toes**



**Red or irritated eyes**

### Please note

Stay in touch with your primary care provider to ensure you continue to receive the routine care you need, such as medication refills, follow-ups and other routine consultations.