

What You Need to Know About COVID-19

What is COVID-19?

- COVID-19 is a new strain of the coronavirus—a virus that is responsible for 15 to 30% of common colds, but it can also cause serious respiratory infections.
- COVID-19 stands for CORONA VIRUS DISEASE and 2019 is the year it was discovered.
- For the current status of cases in our community, see the Hastings Prince Edward Public Health [COVID-19 Dashboard](#).

How does it spread?

- The virus spreads from close contact with the respiratory droplets of a person with COVID-19. These droplets occur when someone coughs, sneezes, talks and breathes.
- Droplets can travel more than two metres/six feet when a person sings, laughs or talks loudly.
- You may also get COVID-19 by touching surfaces that have the virus and then touching your mouth, nose, or eyes.

What are the symptoms?

- Symptoms can take up to 14 days to appear. The most common [symptoms](#) are fever, cough, difficulty breathing, sore throat, runny nose, loss of taste or smell, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, and difficulty swallowing.
- Older adults and children may also have general symptoms like chills, headaches, sleeping more than usual, feeling disoriented, confusion, muscle aches, dizziness, weakness, or falls.
- Some children can get a very rare condition which causes inflammation. Seek medical attention right away if a child is not improving or gets a rash, long lasting fever, red eyes and/or swelling in their hands and feet.
- Some people may have mild or no symptoms. People who have COVID-19, but do not have symptoms, can still spread the virus. People with weakened immune systems, existing health conditions, or who are over the age of 60 are at higher risk for serious illness.

How do we stay safe?

- Limit non-essential trips outside your home.
- Keep two metres/six feet distance from others.
- Wear a mask or face covering.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water or use hand sanitizer (70-90% alcohol).
- Avoid touching your face with unwashed hands.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with your elbow or a tissue. Immediately throw the tissue in the garbage and wash your hands.
- Clean and disinfect high-touch surfaces and objects.
- Stay home if you are feeling sick.
- Avoid close contact with other people who are sick.
- Download the [COVID Alert app](#) so you can be notified directly if you have been in close contact with someone who was contagious with COVID-19.

Are masks required in Hastings and Prince Edward Counties?

- As of July 17, 2020, everyone in Hastings and Prince Edward Counties must wear a mask or face covering in indoor public spaces.
- Wearing a mask can help reduce the spread of COVID-19.
- Even when wearing a mask, it is important to wash your hands often, stay two metres/six feet from others, and stay home if you are sick.
- Learn more about [mandatory masks and face coverings](#) and how to make a [cloth mask](#).

When and how do I get tested for COVID-19?

- If you have COVID-19 symptoms, have been in close contact with someone who has COVID-19, or are concerned you may have been exposed to the virus, get tested.
- Call Telehealth at 1-866-797-0000, your health care provider, or an [assessment centre](#), if you have questions.
- [Test results](#) are available online. If your test is negative, you can stop self-isolating 24 hours after your symptoms have gone away. More information on self-isolation is below.

When should I self-isolate?

- Stay home and [self-isolate](#) for 14 days if you have:
 - tested positive for COVID-19
 - been in close contact with a person with COVID-19
 - returned from travel outside of Canada, including the United States, in the past 14 days been directed by public health to do so.
- Stay home and get tested if you have symptoms of COVID-19, even if they are mild, and [self-isolate](#) while you wait for your results.

Is there a treatment for COVID-19?

- There is no specific treatment for COVID-19 unless you are very sick. Call your health care provider if you need help to relieve the symptoms.
- Call 911 if you or someone else is having difficulty breathing.
- There are no drugs approved for the prevention of COVID-19.
- **Beware of fraud and scams**—*Phishing* is when someone lies over the phone or by email to convince you into giving them your personal information. Hastings Prince Edward Public Health staff will never ask for your credit card or social insurance number.

Other questions? Talk to your health care provider or call our Communicable Disease Program at 613-966-5500 | Toll Free 1-800-267-2803 | TTY: Dial 711 | Website: hpePublicHealth.ca

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Sept 10, 2020