



Information for people who are self-isolating due to contact with a case of COVID-19 or travel to an affected area

Self-isolation is a term for when a person who is at risk of spreading disease avoids contact with others. This is done to prevent spread of disease to other people. Self-isolation is one important way of preventing novel coronavirus (COVID-19) from spreading in British Columbia.

People may be asked to self-isolate when they have travelled recently to an area with many cases of COVID-19 or when they have been in contact with a person who has COVID-19.

Q1. It has been recommended that I self-isolate. What are my next steps?

1. Stay at home and avoid contact with others (self-isolate).
2. Call the provincial health line 8-1-1 (HealthLink BC) to receive advice about self-isolating if you have not already been in contact with public health officials. It is toll-free and has translation services available in more than 130 languages.
3. Remain in self-isolation for 14 days after travel or your last contact with a person confirmed to have COVID-19.

Q2. How do I avoid contact with others?

- We know this is hard, but for the health of your family, friends and community, try to stay at home.
 - Do not go to work or school; if you need a note, ask your health care provider to provide you one.
 - Do not go to public areas, including places of worship, stores, shopping malls and restaurants.
 - Limit visitors to your home.
 - Cancel or reschedule non-urgent appointments.
 - Do not take buses, taxis or ride-sharing where you would be in contact with others.
 - It is okay to have family/friends drop off food or you can use delivery/pick up services for errands such as grocery shopping.

Q3. How do I avoid contact with others in my home?

- Household members should stay in another home or place of residence if possible, especially if they have a compromised immune system or chronic health conditions. If you are sharing your home, stay and sleep in a room with good airflow that is away from others. Use a separate bathroom if you can.

Q4. What if I need medical care?

- Pay attention to your health and how you are feeling. You can call 8-1-1 anytime to talk to a nurse at HealthLinkBC and get advice about how you are feeling and what to do next. 8-1-1 has translation services in 130 languages.

- **Urgent medical care** is needed if there is a change in your health that needs medical help right away. This could be needed due to COVID-19 or for some other reason. If it becomes harder to breathe, you can't drink anything or you feel very unwell; seek urgent medical care at an urgent care clinic or emergency department. Mention to the healthcare providers that you are self-isolating because of COVID-19. If you or someone in your care has chest pains, difficulty breathing, or severe bleeding, it could be a life-threatening emergency. Call 9-1-1 or the local emergency number immediately.
- **If you develop symptoms of COVID-19, get tested, even if symptoms are mild.** Symptoms of COVID-19 are fever, cough, sore throat, shortness of breath and generally feeling unwell. You can call to check if your doctor will be able to test for COVID-19. If they cannot, 8-1-1 can help you find somewhere to be tested.
- **Call ahead before you get medical care.** If leaving your home for medical care, call ahead and tell the clinic you are coming in and that you are self-isolating due to risk of COVID-19. By calling ahead, you help the clinic, hospital, lab, urgent care or doctor's office prepare for your visit and stop the spread of germs. Remind each health care provider that is taking care of you that you are self-isolating due to risk of COVID-19.

Q5. How do I stop the spread of germs?

- **Wear a face mask when you are around others.** When you are sick, wearing a face mask (surgical or procedure mask) helps to stop the spread of germs from you to others. Even in the early stages of infection, people may be able to spread the disease while having very mild symptoms. If possible, wear a face mask when you are in the same room with other people and always wear a mask when you get medical care. If your mask gets wet or dirty, change it and wash your hands right away. You and those you live with do not need to buy and wear other types of masks, such as an N-95 respirator mask. A caregiver may be able to purchase face masks for you at a pharmacy. If a mask is not available, carry tissues with you any time you are around other people. If you need to cough or sneeze, do it into a tissue, then throw the tissue away and clean your hands.
- **Cover your coughs and sneezes.** When you feel a cough or sneeze coming on, cover your mouth and nose with a tissue. Don't have a tissue? Cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve or elbow, not your hands. Wash your hands right away after you sneeze, cough or touch used tissues or masks. Throw used tissues into a lined trash can in your room and tie up that trash bag before adding it with other household waste.
- **Wash your hands.** Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. It is best to dry your hands with a paper towel and throw away after use. If you can't wash your hands, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands. Learn more at www.healthlinkbc.ca/healthlinkbc-files/hand-washing.
- **Avoid sharing household items.** Avoid sharing dishes, cups, eating utensils, towels, bedding, or other items. After using these items, wash them with soap and hot water.
- **Flush the toilet with the lid down.** COVID-19 virus may also be present in poop (stool or feces). Always wash your hands with soap and water after using the toilet.
- **Clean and disinfect common areas once a day.** Each day, clean places and surfaces in the room(s) that you are staying in. Regular cleaning products are fine for this. Then disinfect (kill germs) by mixing 1 part bleach with 9 parts water and applying it to areas that are touched often such as counters, tabletops, doorknobs, bathroom fixtures, toilets, phones, keyboards, tablets, and bedside tables. It is especially important to use bleach to disinfect if you are sharing any common areas (such as a bathroom) with others or if others will be entering the room(s) where you are staying.