

COVID-19 SELF-ISOLATION ADVICE

SELF-ISOLATION MEANS STAYING HOME, KEEPING YOUR DISTANCE FROM OTHER PEOPLE AND ONLY LEAVING HOME FOR EMERGENCY MEDICAL REASONS

PLEASE FOLLOW THE INSTRUCTIONS BELOW TO REDUCE THE SPREAD OF COVID-19

What are the self-isolation requirements?

- If you have symptoms of COVID-19, have tested positive on a rapid antigen test (RAT), have tested positive for COVID-19 on a PCR test, or have chosen not to go for testing, you are required to self-isolate for **10 days**
- Close contacts (non-household members) who are asymptomatic and fully vaccinated do not need to self-isolate
- Close contacts (non-household members) who are symptomatic, not fully vaccinated or immunocompromised will be asked to self-isolate for 10 days
- Close contacts who are household members of cases will be asked to self-isolate regardless of vaccination status
- Close contacts who are associated with the high-risk setting of the case must self-isolate regardless of vaccination status. High-risk settings include:
 - Hospitals and Health care settings (including complex continuing care facilities and acute care facilities)
 - Congregate living settings (e.g., long-term care, retirement homes, group homes, shelters, hospices, post-secondary dormitories, temporary foreign worker setting, correctional institutions)
 - Elementary, middle or secondary schools
 - Child care centres, camp
- Do not go to daycare, school or work, do not go out for errands, reschedule all non-urgent medical appointments, do not leave your home to interact with other people (e.g., no walking or meeting up outside)
- Avoid all visits to settings with vulnerable populations (for example: volunteering or visiting a long-term care home)
- All household members and close contacts will be asked to test right away and again on or after Day 7 since exposure regardless of vaccination status. Continue to monitor for new symptoms and continue isolate (10 additional days from symptom onset) if any symptom develops

Seek assessment and testing if you:

- Have been in [close contact](#) with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19, or
- Experience new or worsening [symptoms](#) such as fever, cough, shortness of breath, sore throat or difficulty swallowing, new smell or taste disorder(s), nausea/vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal pain, runny nose or nasal congestion (unrelated to seasonal allergies, post-nasal drip, etc.)

Information on York Region testing sites is available at [Symptoms, Transmission, Treatment and Testing](#)

How do I self-isolate?

Stay home except when seeking urgent medical care

- Do **not** go to daycare, school or work
- Do not go out for errands; instead have groceries delivered or have a friend/neighbour help out
- Reschedule all non-urgent medical appointments
- Do not leave your home to interact with other people (e.g., no walking or meeting up outside)
- If you require medical attention, drive yourself and use a private vehicle for transport, if possible
 - Do not use public transportation
 - If you get a ride from a friend, family member or ride share, follow [carpooling advice](#) to reduce the risk of transmission

Monitor your symptoms

- Monitor yourself for new symptoms or signs of COVID-19
 - Take and record your temperature daily to monitor for fever (temperature of 37.8°C/100°F or higher)
 - If you have used acetaminophen (e.g., Tylenol) or ibuprofen (e.g., Advil, Motrin), take your temperature at least four hours after using these medications as they mask a fever
- Be aware that symptoms that start off mild or seem to be improving can deteriorate quickly, leading to severe illness or even death
 - Call 911 immediately if you experience any severe symptoms such as difficulty breathing, extreme shortness of breath and severe or sudden onset of chest pain
 - Plan ahead for child care in the event you need urgent emergency medical attention and have to go to the hospital
- If you call 911 for an ambulance, tell the operator you are self-isolating for COVID-19

Separate yourself from other people in your home

- Stay away from other people in your home as much as possible
 - Stay in a separate room or floor
 - Children who are self-isolating should avoid playing with siblings
- Keep beds or mattresses at least 2 meters apart in shared sleeping spaces
- Use a separate washroom, if possible
- Wear a [surgical/procedural mask](#) when in the same room as other family/household members
- Do not have visitors to your home
- Avoid sharing any personal items that can come into contact with saliva, such as toothbrushes, eating utensils, cups/bottles, towels and bedding

Wear a surgical mask

- Wear a [surgical/procedural mask](#) when you are within 2 metres of other people (in your home) or if leaving your home to seek medical attention
 - Children as young as two years old can wear a mask if they are able to remove it
 - If a child has COVID-19, the caregiver can wear a mask and eye protection (e.g., face shield or goggles)
- Others must wear a [surgical/procedural mask](#) when they are around you
- If your mask becomes wet or dirty with secretions, change the mask immediately
- Wash your hands after removing a dirty mask and before putting on a clean mask

Clean your hands

- Wash your hands thoroughly and often for at least 15 seconds, including between your fingers, under your fingernails and your wrists. Dry your hands with a disposable paper towel. If you use cloth towels, do not share them with others and replace when wet
- If hands are not visibly dirty, an alcohol-based hand sanitizer can be used to clean your hands
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth with unwashed hands

Cover your coughs and sneezes

- Cover your cough or sneeze using a tissue, being sure to cover your mouth and nose. Throw the tissue into a garbage lined with a plastic bag and wash your hands immediately with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer
- If you don't have tissues, cough or sneeze into your elbow or sleeve

Cleaning and disinfecting within your home

- [Clean and disinfect](#) all frequently touched surfaces in your home, including bathroom and toilet surfaces, at least once a day and when contaminated with respiratory secretions
- Clean with detergent (soap) and water and then disinfect with an over-the-counter disinfectant
- Clean and disinfect thermometers after each use

Caring for a child who needs to self-isolate

- Please apply the self-isolation advice above to both you and the child
- Continue to support and care for the child, and ask them if they have any questions or fears
- Avoid contact with the child's saliva or body fluids (e.g., avoid kissing)
- Arrange that only one person cares for the child, if possible, to reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19 to other household members
- People who are at greater risk of serious illness from COVID-19 (e.g., older adults, people with some chronic health issues) should not care for the child if another caregiver is available

Travel information

- The Government of Canada is continually updating [travel requirements](#) and possible related restrictions, testing and quarantine requirements due to the current evolving COVID-19 pandemic.

How long do I need to self-isolate if I have tested positive?

Self-isolate for 10 days if you have tested positive for COVID-19 and your symptoms have remained mild to moderate (i.e., you did not need to go to the hospital for care)

- You can discontinue isolation after 10 days from symptom onset (or 10 days from the positive test collection date if you never had symptoms) provided you have no fever (without the use of fever-reducing medications), symptoms are improving for at least 24 hours and you have no gastro-intestinal symptoms in the last 48 hours (e.g., vomiting or diarrhea)

Self-isolate for 20 days if you have tested positive for COVID-19 and were hospitalized in an Intensive Care Unit (ICU) with severe COVID-19 illness or have severe immune compromise

- Examples of severe immune compromise include cancer chemotherapy, untreated HIV infection, taking prednisone for an extended period of time and taking other immune suppressive medications
- You can discontinue isolation after 20 days from symptom onset (or 20 days from positive test collection date if you never had symptoms), provided you have no fever (without the use of fever-reducing medications), symptoms are improving for at least 24 hours and you had no gastro-intestinal symptoms in the last 48 hours

For more details, refer to [Tested! Now What?](#)

Does our whole family/household self-isolate if one of us is positive?

- It is difficult to avoid transmission of COVID-19 within a family or household unit
- If someone in your home tests positive for COVID-19, all members of the family/household must self-isolate and follow the recommendations outlined above as strictly as possible to avoid transmitting COVID-19 to each other
- There may be some exceptions for essential workers/certain occupations. Your workplace health and safety team can help you identify your work options you if you are an exception
- All family/household members who are primary caregivers (e.g., parents of young children) or other household members who were in **close contact** with the COVID-19 positive person during their 10-day isolation period should self-isolate for an additional 10 days. This requires the family/household member to isolate for a total of 20 days

Does our whole family/household self-isolate if one of us has symptoms but is NOT a confirmed case of COVID-19?

- **All household** members a symptomatic individual should stay at home, except for essential reasons, until the symptomatic individual receives a negative test result or has been provided an alternate diagnosis by a health care professional
- Essential reasons to leave the home include essential errands such as getting groceries, going to the pharmacy, attending medical appointments and/or dealing with a medical emergency. You **cannot** attend school or child care if someone in your household is symptomatic
- Household members should stay away from the person with symptoms as much as possible

What do we do if other members of our household develop symptoms?

- If other members of your household start to have COVID-19 symptoms, have them isolate and seek assessment and testing at a [COVID-19 Assessment Centre](#), a [participating pharmacy](#) or call York Region Public Health at 1-800-361-5653

My child is sick, but I don't want to test them. How long do they need to isolate?

- If your child has symptoms or was advised to isolate and seek assessment by the [York Region School and Child Care screening tool](#), but you do not wish to get them tested or cannot access testing at this time, your child must remain in isolation for 10 days. Keep them as separate as possible from all household members
- **All household members** of someone with symptoms of COVID-19 should stay at home, except for essential reasons, until the symptomatic individual receives a negative test result or have been provided an alternate diagnosis by a health care professional
- Essential reasons to leave the home include essential errands such as getting groceries, going to the pharmacy, attending medical appointments and/or dealing with a medical emergency. You cannot attend school or child care if someone in your household is symptomatic

How long do I self-isolate if I am NOT fully vaccinated and have been in close contact with a COVID-19 case?

Self-isolate for 10 days if you have been in close contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19 starting from the day of your last contact with them.

- If you cannot isolate from a case because they need care, then your 10 days will start after the case's isolation period has ended. You can discontinue your self-isolation after 10 days if you do not develop symptoms
- If you develop symptoms during your isolation, seek [assessment and testing](#) and get in touch with everyone you have been in [close contact](#) with from 48 hours before your symptoms started and while you had symptoms. Ask them to immediately self-isolate for 10 days.
- Public Health may advise you to extend your isolation period if you develop symptoms towards the end of your original 10-day self-isolation. It can take up time for symptoms of COVID-19 to develop after an exposure to a case. It will also take time for your symptoms to go away. It is recommended to get tested on or after day seven after your last exposure

What if I am unable to self-isolate safely at home?

- York Region residents who are unable to safely self-isolate away from others in their household can temporarily access [COVID-19 Voluntary Isolation Housing](#) located in and operated by The Regional Municipality of Peel (Peel Region) and funded by the Governments of Canada and Ontario
- There is no cost for eligible residents to stay at this temporary isolation housing for 10 to 14 days and each stay is entirely voluntary. Children under the age of 16 must stay with a parent or guardian

- Please call Peel Region's Isolation Housing Program intake line at 905-281-1269 to find out if you are eligible to use the isolation housing
- If you need financial assistance to take 10 to 14 days off work to self-isolate, you may be eligible to receive emergency financial assistance for paying rent, utilities and food. Call Access York at 1-877-464-9675, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday to Friday or email accessyork@york.ca

Questions?

If you have any questions about self-isolation or COVID-19, call York Region Public Health's **Health Connection** line at **1-800-361-5653** from Monday to Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

For more information visit york.ca/COVID19