



Alberta Health Services

[COVID-19 Info](#) | **Continuous masking** remains in effect at all AHS, APL and Covenant facilities provincewide.

Symptoms, About, Spread

COVID-19

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Symptoms

People should stay home and away from others when they have symptoms of respiratory illness. The symptoms could be due to influenza, RSV, COVID-19, or other respiratory viruses.

If you have any of the following new or worsening symptoms not related to a pre-existing illness or health condition, testing is recommended:

- Fever or chills
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Sore throat
- Cough
- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- Nausea or diarrhea
- Loss or altered sense of taste/smell

Headache, fatigue, and joint or muscle pain are also common symptoms of COVID-19. However, you don't not need to isolate and be tested unless you also have at least one of the other COVID-19 symptoms listed above.

Testing is recommended using an at-home rapid test if you have access to one. For advice on whether you need be tested through AHS, use the [COVID-19 Assessment & Testing Tool](#).

If you don't have a test, test negative, or choose not to be tested, you should stay home until you feel well enough to resume normal activities and you have been free of fever for 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medication. This is because your symptoms could be caused by a different virus that can be spread to other people.

Managing Your Symptoms

Most people recover from COVID-19 without special treatment and can manage mild symptoms at home. Go to [COVID-19 Self-Care Guide](#) for more information.

If since the start of your symptoms, you are experiencing any of the following:

- Fever: higher than 39 degrees for three days
- Cough: return of cough after being cough free
- Increasing shortness of breath or shortness of breath at rest
- Inability to lie down because of difficulty breathing
- Signs of dehydration such as: passing only a little urine, feeling very lightheaded
- Chronic health conditions that you are having difficulty managing because of your current illness

Call your family doctor for care. If you don't have a family doctor, visit [Alberta Find a Doctor](#) or call Health Link at 811.

About COVID-19

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses. Some cause respiratory illness in humans, ranging from mild common colds to severe illnesses. Others cause illness in animals. Rarely, animal coronaviruses can infect people, and more rarely, these can then spread from person to person through close contact. Novel coronaviruses are new strains of the virus that have not been previously identified in humans.

COVID-19 is the disease caused by SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus, a new virus that was first recognized in December 2019.

COVID-19 Spread

The time that a person can spread COVID-19 to others is called the infectious period. COVID-19 is passed from person-to-person through tiny droplets of liquid, spread by coughing, sneezing, talking, laughing and singing. This means that a person would need to have contact with droplets from an infected person or contaminated surfaces, in order to be exposed to COVID-19.

Smaller droplets, or aerosols, can spread through the air over distances longer than 2 metres and longer periods of time. The risks of aerosol spread is greater in indoor settings that may be poorly ventilated, crowded, where gatherings are taking place for prolonged periods or where heavy breathing or exertion is occurring.

Animals can be infected with COVID-19 after close contact with people. It is recommended that people who have COVID-19 also stay away from pets. Try to have someone else care for your pets if you have COVID-19. If you must care for your pets, avoid close contact with them and wash your hands well before and after interacting with your animals, their supplies, and food.

COVID-19 vs. Influenza

In some ways, COVID-19 is similar to influenza (also known as the flu):

- Both COVID-19 and the flu cause respiratory disease. The symptoms can be similar and it can be difficult to tell the difference between influenza and COVID-19 symptoms.

However, there are some key differences between COVID-19 and the flu:

- The flu and COVID-19 are caused by different viruses.
- COVID-19 causes severe disease in a higher percentage of cases than seasonal influenza.
- Because COVID-19 can cause serious illness, it is critical to keep it from spreading by having people follow public health recommendations, including staying home and away from others if symptoms occur.