How to Care for Someone Who Has COVID-19 (Coronavirus) at home

Caring for someone at home

Most people who get sick with COVID-19 will have only mild illness and should recover at home. Mild illness might include fever and cough. People who are sick with COVID-19 and their caregivers must isolate (not leave the home except for healthcare).

At-home care may not be appropriate for elders, people who live in a crowded home, people of any age with certain serious medical conditions like lung disease, heart disease, or diabetes. These groups are more likely to experience serious effects from COVID-19 and should contact their doctor, clinic, nursing station or call 811 as soon as symptoms start.

In this factsheet, you will learn how to prevent the spread of germs, watch for emergency signs, treat symptoms, and learn when to end care.

Prevent the spread of germs

COVID-19 spreads person-to-person when someone with the virus coughs, sneezes, sings or speaks. It is also spreads through contact like touching surfaces or shaking hands. Someone with mild symptoms may spread the disease without knowing they are sick. It is important for anyone showing even mild symptoms to stay inside and stay 6 feet away from others during their recovery.

- If possible, have the sick person use another bathroom.
- Avoid sharing items like towels, dishes, and bedding.
- Have them wear a disposable mask or cloth mask over the mouth and nose when around others in the home. If the mask or cloth gets moist, change it. Cloth masks can be washed and reused.
- Wash hands with soap or use hand sanitizer often, especially after interacting with the sick person.
- Avoid touching eyes, hands, and mouth.
- Several times per day, clean flat surfaces that droplets can land on, such as tabletops or countertops, and surfaces that are touched often, such as doorknobs. Use household cleaners and disinfectants. If the sick person uses the same bathroom as others in the home, clean and disinfect the bathroom after each use by the sick person.
- If possible, keep windows open to increase air flow.
- Wash laundry thoroughly. Wash hands after handling clothes.
- Avoid having visitors.
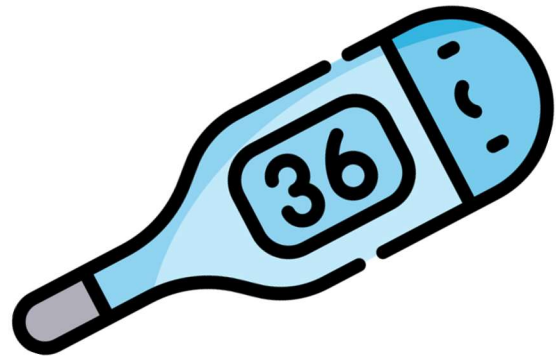
Know the emergency warning signs

People who develop emergency warning signs for COVID-19 should call 911 and get medical attention immediately. Emergency warning signs include:

- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- Constant pain or pressure in the chest
- Confusion or can't wake up
- Blue lips or face

Treating symptoms

There is no cure for COVID-19 at this time. To treat symptoms, the sick person should drink lots of water and rest. Contact a healthcare provider for advice. They may suggest or prescribe over-the-counter drugs like Tylenol to help with symptoms. Many over-the-counter drugs are covered through non-Insured health benefits.

Most people will have symptoms for a few days and recover after 1-2 weeks. Elders and those with serious medical conditions may have severe symptoms that last a long time or need hospital care. People in these groups should contact their healthcare provider as soon as they show symptoms.

Guidelines for ending home isolation

Those who no longer have symptoms should consult with their health provider before they stop isolation.

For more information:
Saskatchewan.ca/coronavirus
Call Healthline (Dial 811)