



## Durham Region Health Department **Facts about...**



# **Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)**

## **What is it?**

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses that cause illnesses in humans ranging from the common cold to more severe diseases. Examples include Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS-CoV) and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS). Most recently, a novel (new) coronavirus (COVID-19) was identified based on a cluster of respiratory illnesses in Wuhan, China.

In some cases, illness caused by COVID-19 can be mild. In more severe cases, COVID-19 can cause pneumonia, severe acute respiratory syndrome and kidney failure.

## **How is it spread?**

COVID-19 can spread from person to person through:

- Close personal contact, such as touching or shaking hands.
- Contact with nose and throat secretions (e.g., coughing and sneezing).
- Touching an object or surface with the virus on it, then touching your mouth, nose, or eyes before washing your hands.

## **What do I look for?**

Common symptoms of COVID-19 include fever (temperature of 37.8 degrees Celsius or greater), new or worsening cough and shortness of breath (dyspnea).

Other symptoms of COVID-19 can include sore throat, difficulty swallowing, changes to sense of taste and/or smell, nausea/vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal pain and runny nose, or nasal congestion (not caused by seasonal allergies).

Atypical symptoms of COVID-19 should be considered, particularly in children, older persons, and people living with a developmental disability. Atypical symptoms can include unexplained fatigue, body aches, delirium, unexplained or increased number of falls, acute functional decline, exacerbation of chronic conditions, chills, headaches, croup, conjunctivitis, multisystem inflammatory vasculitis in children and unexplained feeding difficulties in infants.

Symptoms of multisystem inflammatory vasculitis in children may include persistent fever, abdominal pain, conjunctivitis, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea and rash.

*over...*

905-668-2020 or 1-800-841-2729 | [durham.ca/health](https://durham.ca/health)

If you require this information in an accessible format, contact 1-800-841-2729.



# Can I get tested?

Any person who has at least one symptom, even if the symptom(s) are mild, can be tested for COVID-19. People who have no symptoms but are concerned they have been exposed to a person with COVID-19 or who are at risk of exposure in their workplace (e.g. health care workers, grocery store employees, food processing workers), can also be tested for COVID-19.

If you need testing for COVID-19 complete the Lakeridge Health Online Assessment Form at <http://covidswab.lh.ca/> to access the COVID-19 Assessment Clinic.

# How is it treated?

There is no specific treatment for COVID-19. Supportive care based on symptoms may be helpful. Currently there is no vaccine for COVID-19.

# How can I protect myself?

Standard practices to prevent exposure and transmission of a range of illnesses should be followed. These practices include:

- Frequent and thorough handwashing with soap and water or use of hand sanitizer when hands are not visibly dirty.
- Coughing or sneezing into your sleeve or elbow and encouraging others to do the same.
- Washing your hands after handling nose and throat secretions (e.g., after throwing out used facial tissues).
- Avoid touching your face and clean your hands before touching eyes, nose or mouth.
- Practice physical distancing by limiting close contacts with people outside of your household and maintain 2 metres from other people if you need to go out.
- Wear a non-medical mask if you cannot practice physical distancing.
- Cleaning and disinfecting surfaces, especially those that are high touch areas.
- Do not share water bottles, straws, eating utensils, cigarettes, toothbrushes, toys or anything else that has been in contact with saliva, nose or throat secretions.
- If you are ill, stay at home and isolate yourself from others.
- Avoid close contact with anyone showing symptoms of respiratory illness such as coughing and sneezing.

**If you are concerned about symptoms, contact your health care provider or Durham Region Health Department and wear a mask when attending medical appointments.**

May 27, 2020

905-668-2020 or 1-800-841-2729 | [durham.ca/health](http://durham.ca/health)

If you require this information in an accessible format, contact 1-800-841-2729.

