

How to care for a child with COVID-19 at home: Advice for caregivers



Children who have mild COVID-19 symptoms are able to stay at home with a caregiver throughout their recovery without needing hospitalization.

If you are caring for a child who has or may have COVID-19, it is important to follow the steps below to protect yourself and others in the home, as well as those in your community.

Monitor your child for symptoms

- › Monitor your child's [symptoms](#) as directed by your healthcare provider or [Public Health Authority](#).
- › If your child develops severe symptoms, call 911 or your local emergency number.
- › If calling an ambulance, tell the dispatcher that the child has/may have COVID-19. If going to the hospital in a private vehicle, call ahead to the hospital and let them know that the child has/may have COVID-19.

Keep hands clean

- › [Wash your hands](#) and those of your child **often** with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after any type of contact with the child (e.g. changing diapers) and after removing gloves.
- › If soap and water are not available and if your hands do not look dirty, use an [alcohol-based sanitizer](#) (ABHS) that contains at least 60% alcohol. If hands look dirty, remove dirt with a wet wipe first, then use ABHS.
- › Dry hands with disposable paper towels.
- › If not available, use a reusable towel and replace it when it becomes wet. Do not share.

- › Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands and encourage your child not to touch their face, either.

Avoid spreading infection to others

- › Your child should remain in your home or in a monitored outdoor space, should not play with friends or go to school or to public areas, and should not be within 2 metres of others if possible.
- › Encourage the child to use tissues or cough/sneeze into their elbow to decrease the spread of respiratory droplets.
- › Do not share personal items with the child, such as toothbrushes, towels, bed linen, utensils or electronic devices.
- › Do not share food and drinks.
- › Use a separate bathroom from the child if possible. If not possible, put the toilet lid down before flushing.
- › **For breastfeeding mothers:** given the health benefits to your child from breastfeeding, it is recommended that you continue breastfeeding.
 - If you are feeding with formula or expressed milk, sterilize the equipment carefully before each use and do not share bottles or a breast pump.
- › Prevent contact with animals, as there have been several reports of people transmitting COVID-19 to their pets.



Keep your environment clean

- › Follow instructions for the safe [use and disposal or laundering](#) of face masks provided by your Public Health Authority.
- › Place used gloves and other contaminated items in a lined container, secure the contents and dispose of them with other household waste.
- › Place possibly contaminated laundry into a container with a plastic liner and do not shake. Wash with regular laundry soap and hot water (60-90°C), and dry well. Clothing and linens belonging to the child can be washed with other laundry. Gloves and [non-medical mask or face covering](#), made with at least two layers of tightly woven fabric, [constructed](#) to completely cover the nose and mouth without gaping, and secured to the head by ties or ear loops should be worn when in direct contact with contaminated laundry.
- › To disinfect, use only [approved hard-surface disinfectants](#) that have a Drug Identification Number (DIN). A DIN is an 8-digit number given by Health Canada that confirms the disinfectant product is approved and safe for use in Canada.
- › When approved hard surface disinfectants are not available, for household disinfection, a diluted bleach solution can be prepared in accordance with the instructions on the label, or in a ratio of 5 millilitres (mL) of bleach per 250 mL of water OR 20 mL of bleach per litre of water. This ratio is based on bleach containing 5% sodium hypochlorite, to give a 0.1% sodium hypochlorite solution. Follow instructions for [proper handling of household \(chlorine\) bleach](#).
- › If they can withstand the use of liquids for disinfection, high-touch electronic devices (e.g. keyboards, touch screens) may be disinfected with 70% alcohol at least daily.
- › Wearing a face mask, including a non-medical mask or facial covering, may trap respiratory droplets and stop them from contaminating surfaces - but wearing a mask does not reduce the need for [cleaning and disinfecting](#).

Protect yourself

- › Only one healthy person should provide care for the child, but everyone in your home should follow this guidance.
- › People who are at [risk of more severe disease or outcomes](#) from COVID-19 should not care for a child with COVID-19. These persons include:
 - older adults
 - people of any age with chronic medical conditions
 - people of any age who are immunocompromised, or
 - people living with obesity
- › Some people may transmit COVID-19 even though they do not show any symptoms. If you need to be within 2 metres of the child, wear disposable gloves, eye protection and a medical mask, if available. If not available, wear a [non-medical mask or face covering](#), made with at least two layers of tightly woven fabric, [constructed](#) to completely cover the nose and mouth without gaping, and secured to the head by ties or ear loops.

Monitor yourself for symptoms

- › Monitor yourself for symptoms and follow any advice provided by your local public health authority about [quarantine \(self-isolating\)](#).
- › If you develop even mild symptoms, [isolate](#) yourself as quickly as possible and contact your local [Public Health Authority](#) for further instructions.

Maintain these supplies

- Medical masks, if available and tolerable, for the child and the caregiver. If not available, use a non-medical mask or face covering
- Eye protection (face shield or goggles) for use by caregiver
- Disposable gloves (do not re-use) for use by caregiver
- Disposable paper towels
- Tissues
- Waste container with plastic liner
- Thermometer
- Over the counter medication to reduce fever (e.g. ibuprofen or acetaminophen)
- Running water
- Hand soap
- Alcohol-based hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol
- Dish soap
- Regular laundry soap
- Regular household cleaning products
- One-step cleaner/disinfectant
- Hard-surface disinfectant, or if not available, concentrated (5%) liquid bleach and a separate container for dilution
- Alcohol prep wipes or appropriate cleaning products for high-touch electronics

We can all do our part in preventing the spread of COVID-19. For more information, visit t

Canada.ca/coronavirus
or contact 1-833-784-4397