

## Be Prepared for Coronavirus (COVID-19)

These are the most important ways that you can protect yourself and your family from respiratory illness, including COVID-19.

### Make a plan

If COVID-19 becomes common in your community, you will want to have thought about how to change your behaviours and routines to reduce the risk of infection.

Your plan should include how you can change your regular habits to reduce your exposure to crowded places. For example, you may:

- Do your grocery shopping at off-peak hours
- Commute by public transit outside of the busy rush hour
- Opt to exercise outdoors instead of in an indoor fitness class

Your plan should also include what you will do if you become sick. If you are a caregiver of children or other dependents, you will want to have thought ahead to engage backup caregivers.

You should also think about what you will do if a member of your family becomes sick and needs care. Talk to your employer about working from home if you are needed to care for a family member at home.

If you, yourself, become ill, stay home until you are no longer showing symptoms. Employers should not require a sick leave note as that will put added pressure on limited health care services.

Your plan should include shopping for supplies that you should have on hand at all times. This will ensure you do not need to leave your home while you are sick or busy caring for an ill family member.

Your plan should build on the kits you have prepared for other potential emergencies. For more information on how to prepare yourself and your family in the event of an emergency, please visit [GetPrepared.ca](https://www.getprepared.ca).

### Fill your prescriptions

If you use prescription medications, refill your prescriptions now so that you do not have to go to a busy pharmacy if you do become sick. Consider seeing your health care provider to renew your prescriptions ahead of time.

### Stock up on essentials but avoid panic buying

At this time, it makes sense to fill your cupboards with non-perishable food items, so that you do not need to go shopping if you become sick.

It is easier on the supply chain if people gradually build up their household stores instead of making large-scale purchases all at once. To do this, you can add a few extra items to your grocery cart every time you shop. Good options are easy-to-prepare foods like:

- Dried pasta and sauce
- Prepared canned soups
- Canned vegetables and beans

It is also a good idea to have extra stores of:

- Pet food
- Toilet paper
- Facial tissue
- Feminine hygiene products
- Diapers (if you have children who use them)

The reason for stocking up on these items is not necessarily because you will need to self-isolate. Having these supplies on hand will ensure you do not need to leave your home at the peak of the outbreak or if you become ill.

### **How to care for those who are ill**

If you or a member of your family become ill with COVID-19, there are precautions that should be taken in the home. Your health care provider will advise you if hospital care is more appropriate.

To prepare for this potential situation, you should have on hand:

- Soap
- Facial tissue
- Paper towels
- Alcohol-based hand sanitizer
- Household cleaning products
- Regular detergents for washing dishes and doing laundry
- Fever-reducing medications, such as acetaminophen or ibuprofen
  - This includes products for children if you are a parent or caregiver
- Plastic garbage bags for containing soiled tissues and other waste
- Household bleach for creating a solution of 1 part bleach to 9 parts water to disinfect surfaces

### **Get reliable information**

Make sure that you get high-quality information about COVID-19 from reliable sources. The World Health Organization, The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and The Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) are reliable sources of information, as are your public health authorities.

If you are finding that the news media is making you feel anxious, take a break from it.

### **Communicate with family, friends and neighbours**

Let your family, friends and neighbours know that you are making plans to prepare for COVID-19. Share your plan with them, as this might motivate them to make a plan of their own. Talk to them about a buddy system in which you agree to check in on each other and run essential errands if you become sick.

**For more information on Coronavirus (COVID-19) visit [www.educateyourhealth.com](http://www.educateyourhealth.com)**