

INFECTION PREVENTION AND CONTROL IN THE HOME DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC

***Information Brief for Parents and Caregivers:
PRACTICES WHEN A PARENT/CAREGIVER, A FAMILY MEMBER OR A CHILD HAVE COVID-19***

1. I am a parent/caregiver sick with COVID-19 and still have to care for my infant/child. What should I do to prevent the infection from spreading to my infant/child or other family members?

It is recommended to seek an alternative care provider if you have a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19. If you are sick and cannot isolate yourself completely from the rest of your family, please follow these steps to reduce the possibility of spreading COVID-19 to your infant/child or a family member:

- Isolate yourself within a well-ventilated room and/or keep a physical distance of approximately 2 metres as much as possible.
- Always wear a mask (single-use or cloth mask) if available and wash /sanitize your hands with hand sanitizer before and after caring for your infant/child and a family member, including:
 - when within a close distance (less than 2 metres)
 - touching (dressing, washing, toileting)
 - preparing food
 - feeding (please see a separate brief on breastfeeding and formula feeding for more information)
 - touching infant's/child's or other family member's clothes, items and environment (i.e., furniture, linens, toys, dishes, etc.)
- Do **not** share your food, drinks, dishes and other items (toothbrushes, towels, clothes, electronics, remote control devices, etc.) with your child and other family members.
- If possible, do not share the same bathrooms with other family members and **put down the toilet lid when flushing**.
- At least once daily, clean and disinfect surfaces that you touch often (i.e., toilets, bedside tables, doorknobs, phones, television remotes, etc.) using the approved hand-surface disinfectant. The list of products can be found on [Health Canada Website: Hard-surface disinfectants and hand sanitizers \(COVID-19\): List of hard-surface disinfectants](#). For detailed instructions on how to clean your house, please see another Health Nexus COVID-19 Pandemic brief on *House and Toys Cleaning*.

*Please note that **cleaning products** remove germs, dirt, and impurities from surfaces by using soap (or detergent) and water. Cleaning **does not** necessarily kill germs, but by removing them, it lowers their numbers and the risk of spreading infection; **disinfecting products** on another hand kill germs on surfaces using chemicals (Health Canada, 2020).*

Tips on how to properly wash or sanitize hands can be found on [Public Health Agency of Canada website: Reduce the Spread of COVID-19 – Wash your Hands](#).

Instructions on how to make a non-medical cloth mask can be found on [Health Canada Website: instructions on Making a Sew and Non-Sew Cloth Face Covering](#).

Please go to the [Ontario Public Health website](#) for the instructions on how to properly **put on, remove and discard** a face mask. Please remember that both single-use and cloth masks need to be removed and discarded when they become damp or soiled. If you choose to reuse the cloth mask, it can be laundered with other items using a **hot** cycle (60-90 C°) and then completely dried.

2. My infant/child has COVID-19. How can I care for them safely to reduce the risk of getting sick?

When caring for an infant or child with suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 (even if they show no symptoms), it is best to arrange for the same family member to provide all direct care until a child tests negative for COVID-19.

Please remember that older adults, people with underlying medical conditions and those who are immunocompromised are at increased risk for contracting the disease, so those people should not be taking care of the infant/child and should not visit, if possible.

Parents and caregivers should follow these instructions when taking care of an infant/child with COVID-19:

- Do not put a facemask on an infant/child who is less than 2 years old, and/or who has difficulty breathing.
- Encourage your child to cough and sneeze in their sleeve or a tissue as much as possible.
- Encourage your child **not** to touch their face.
- Try your best to wash or sanitize your child's hands after they have coughed or sneezed, touched their face, after using the toilet, as well as before and after eating.
- When you are in close contact with your infant/child (within less than 2 metres) and need to provide care, including toileting, diapering, feeding, washing, bathing, dressing, wiping face, etc., do the following:
 - wear disposable gloves ([instruction on how to safely remove and discard gloves can be found here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ATU383lft8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ATU383lft8))
 - wear a single-use or a cloth mask
 - wash your hands before putting the gloves on and after taking them off, or if not available before and after caring for your child.
- Do not share food, drinks, dishes, clothes, towels, toothbrushes, electronics, and linens with your infant/child.
- Wear disposable gloves and a mask when handling infant's/child's laundry. Dirty laundry can be washed with other items on a **hot** cycle. For detailed instructions on how to clean your house, please see another Health Nexus COVID-19 Pandemic brief on *House and Toys Cleaning*.
- Ensure that physical distancing with other family members is maintained [as much as possible](#) during mealtime and socializing.
- **Isolate yourself according to Health Canada instructions.**

If you have more questions about infection prevention and control, please contact: Olga Bondar, Health Promotion Consultant at o.bondar@healthnexus.ca

References:

Health Canada: *Coronavirus disease (COVID-19): How to isolate at home when you may have COVID-19.* <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/publications/diseases-conditions/covid-19-how-to-isolate-at-home.html>

Health Canada: *Cleaning and disinfecting public spaces (COVID-19).* <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/publications/diseases-conditions/cleaning-disinfecting-public-spaces.html>

Public Health Ontario: *When and How to Wear a Mask.* <https://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/documents/ncov/factsheet/factsheet-covid-19-how-to-wear-mask.pdf?la=en>

Health Canada: *Coronavirus disease (COVID-19): How to care for a person with COVID-19 at home – Advice for caregivers.*

<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/publications/diseases-conditions/how-to-care-for-person-with-covid-19-at-home-advice-for-caregivers.html>

Health Canada: *Coronavirus disease (COVID-19): How to care for a child with COVID-19 at home – Advice for caregivers.*

<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/publications/diseases-conditions/how-to-care-for-child-with-covid-19-at-home-advice-for-caregivers.html>

Public Health Agency of Canada: *Reduce the Spread of COVID-19 – Wash your Hands.*

<https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/phac-aspc/documents/services/diseases-maladies/reduce-spread-covid-19-wash-your-hands/eng-handwashing.pdf>

Health Canada: *Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19). Vulnerable Populations and COVID-19.*

<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/publications/diseases-conditions/vulnerable-populations-covid-19.html>

WHO: *Home care for patients with COVID-19 presenting with mild symptoms and management of their contacts.*

[https://www.who.int/publications-detail/home-care-for-patients-with-suspected-novel-coronavirus-\(ncov\)-infection-presenting-with-mild-symptoms-and-management-of-contacts](https://www.who.int/publications-detail/home-care-for-patients-with-suspected-novel-coronavirus-(ncov)-infection-presenting-with-mild-symptoms-and-management-of-contacts)

INFECTION PREVENTION AND CONTROL IN THE HOME DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Information Brief for Parents and Caregivers: HOUSE AND TOY CLEANING

1. If I or my family members are sick with COVID-19, how can I clean my home to prevent the spread of COVID-19 to other members of the household?

Health Canada has issued recommendation on how to clean your house effectively in order to prevent the spread of COVID-19 to other family members and children.

Follow these steps to prevent the virus from contaminating your house and spreading to others:

- Place used face masks, gloves and other contaminated items which you or a family member wore in a *lined container* (preferably with plastic bag and a lid), secure the contents and dispose of them with other household waste.
- Place laundry or/and clothes that were worn by a person infected with COVID-19 into a container with a *plastic liner/bag* and **do not shake**. Wash with regular laundry soap and hot water (60-90°C), and dry well. Clothing and linens belonging to the infected person can be washed with other laundry.
- At least **once a day** clean and disinfect surfaces that household members touch often, such as:
 - *toilets*
 - *laundry containers*
 - *bedside tables*
 - *doorknobs*
 - *phones*
 - *television or other remote-control devices*
 - *Toys (see cleaning instructions below)*
- If the surface is visibly dirty, use soap and water first to clean it, then 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. The list of products can be found on [Health Canada Website: Hard-surface disinfectants and hand sanitizers \(COVID-19\): List of hard-surface disinfectants.](#)
- High-touch electronic devices (e.g., keyboards, touch screens, remote controls) should be disinfected with **70% alcohol solution** **lightly applied to single-use gauze, paper towel or a cloth** (alcohol prep wipes can be used as well) **at least daily**. After the surface is wiped, leave the area for 10 minutes to dry.
- Use of vinegar or/and natural cleaners are not recommended. If approved hard-surface disinfectants are not available, a diluted **bleach solution** can be prepared by following the instructions on the label, or in a ratio of:
 - *1 teaspoon (5 mL) per cup (250 mL) or*
 - *4 teaspoons (20 mL) per 1 litre (1000 mL)*

2. How can I clean my child's toys during COVID-19 Pandemic?

The following guidelines apply to toy cleaning when a child is sick with COVID-19.

If you have multiple children in the home:

- Attempt your best to disinfect toys if used by a sick child before giving them to a child with no COVID-19 infection.
- If the toys cannot be disinfected (i.e., books, puzzles, magazines), they should not be shared between a child who is sick with COVID-19 and a child who does not have COVID-19. Books, puzzles, and magazines that were touched by a child with COVID-19 can be put away for 3-4 days and then re-used.

When a child is sick with COVID-19, toys should be cleaned **daily**. Follow these steps to ensure that safe cleaning practices are used:

- Clean toys with soap and water (especially if visibly dirty).
- Disinfect toys with:
 - *A dishwasher/cart washer cycle (must reach 82°C,) or*
 - *70% alcohol solution for 10 minutes (70% alcohol solution can be applied to single-use gauze or a paper towel to wipe down the toy surface), or*
 - *Bleach solution (2 tablespoons/15 ml of bleach in 3 litres of water)*
- Rinse thoroughly after disinfection.
- Air-dry prior to storage.

3. If I am sick with COVID-19, but must touch my child's toys, clothing, linens and environment, how can I do it in a safe way?

If a parent or a caregiver is sick with COVID-19, they should always wash their hands before and after touching child's items and toys and wear a mask. For more information on how to care for a family member during COVID-19 pandemic, please read [Information Brief for Parents: Caring for Your Family Member and Child/Infant with COVID-19 Infection](#).

4. Should I wear gloves when cleaning my house and touching items (i.e. masks, clothing, dishes, etc.) and linens that were used by family members with COVID-19 infection?

Health Canada recommends wearing gloves when touching items, clothes or linens used by a person with COVID-19. If you wear gloves, they should be removed and safely discarded (refer to video link below) after cleaning is done, they **should not** be reused or disinfected, and proper hand washing or sanitization should be done before putting gloves on and after removing gloves.

Please remember, gloves do not replace hand hygiene! Tips on how to properly wash or sanitize hands can be found on [Public Health Agency of Canada: Reduce the Spread of COVID-19 – Wash your Hands](#).

Instruction on how to safely remove and discard gloves can be found here:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ATU383lIfT8>

If you have more questions about infection prevention and control in your home during the COVID-19 pandemic, please contact: Olga Bondar, Health Promotion Consultant at o.bondar@healthnexus.ca.

References:

UNICEF: *Cleaning and hygiene tips to help keep the COVID-19 virus out of your home.*

<https://www.unicef.org/coronavirus/cleaning-and-hygiene-tips-help-keep-coronavirus-covid-19-out-your-home>

Health Canada. *Coronavirus disease (COVID-19): How to care for a person with COVID-19 at home – Advice for caregivers.*

<https://bit.ly/2XixtuL>

Public Health Agency of Canada: *Reduce the Spread of COVID-19 – Wash your Hands.*

<https://bit.ly/39Xf4GC>

Public Health Ontario. *Best Practices for Environmental Cleaning for Prevention and Control of Infections in All Health Care Settings, 3rd Edition.*

<https://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/documents/bp-environmental-cleaning.pdf>

The New England Journal of Medicine. *Aerosol and Surface Stability of SARS-CoV-2 as Compared with SARS-CoV-1.* DOI: 10.1056/NEJMc2004973

<https://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMc2004973>

BC Centre for Disease Control: *Cleaning and Disinfection.*

<http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19/prevention-risks/cleaning-and-disinfecting>

INFECTION PREVENTION AND CONTROL IN THE HOME DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Information Brief for Parents and Caregivers: UNPACKING AND COOKING FOOD

1. How should I care for food item brought home from a store?

Currently, the risk of getting COVID-19 from food is very low and there is no evidence to date confirming that COVID-19 can be spread through food. However, additional precautions may be considered during eating as it may be possible to catch the virus by touching a surface or object contaminated by the virus and then touching one's face.

Washing hands before and after unpacking foods is recommended. Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use an alcohol-based hand rub. Tips on how to properly wash or sanitize hands can be found on [Public Health Agency of Canada: Reduce the Spread of COVID-19 – Wash your Hands.](#)

When unpacking food items at home:

- Remove any unnecessary packaging and dispose into a waste bin with a lid.
- Packaging like cans can be wiped clean with a disinfectant before being opened or stored.
- Wash unpackaged produce, such as fruit and vegetables, thoroughly under running water. Do not add soap, as it can cause stomach upset, vomiting and/or diarrhea.

2. Should I prepare and cook food items differently during COVID-19 pandemic?

General food hygiene tips remain the same during COVID-19 pandemic, as currently there is no evidence to show that COVID-19 can be transmitted through food. Follow these food safety steps in your daily routine:

- Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water for at least 20 seconds before and after preparing any food.
- Use separate cutting boards to prepare uncooked meat/fish/poultry and produce.
- Cook food to the recommended temperature. See **Appendix A** for recommended temperatures.
- Where possible, keep perishable items refrigerated or frozen, and pay attention to product expiry dates.
- Clean your kitchen countertops and surfaces (including **cutting boards** and **sinks**) before and after preparing food. It is advised to use paper towels, wipes or single-use cloths to avoid the risk of cross-contamination and the spread of bacteria/virus. To clean, use a kitchen sanitizer/disinfectant (as directed) or a bleach solution (5 millilitres, or mL, bleach to 750 mL of water). Rinse all items/surfaces/sinks carefully with water before cooking.
- Aim to recycle or dispose of food waste and packaging in an appropriate and sanitary manner, avoiding build-up of refuse which could attract pests.
- Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds before eating and make sure your children do the same.
- Always use clean utensils and plates.

References:

McGill Reporter: *COVID-19 Q&A: Jennifer Ronholm on staying safe while shopping for groceries.*

<https://reporter.mcgill.ca/covid-19-qa-jennifer-ronholm-on-staying-safe-while-shopping-for-groceries/>

UNICEF: *Easy, affordable and healthy eating tips during the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) outbreak.*

<https://uni.cf/3c5FebR>

UNICEF: *Cleaning and hygiene tips to help keep the COVID-19 virus out of your home.*

<https://www.unicef.org/coronavirus/cleaning-and-hygiene-tips-help-keep-coronavirus-covid-19-out-your-home>

Public Health Agency of Canada: *Reduce the Spread of COVID-19 – Wash your Hands.*

<https://bit.ly/39Xf4GC>

Government of Canada: *Coronavirus disease (COVID-19): Prevention and risks.*

<https://bit.ly/39SNI4o>

Safe Grocery Shopping: *U of G Expert Dispels Myths.*

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=snnpNx6gRIY&utm_source=guelphtoday.com&utm_campaign=guelphtoday.com&utm_medium=referral

Dietitians of Canada: *Advice for the general public about COVID-19.*

<https://www.dietitians.ca/News/2020/Advice-for-the-general-public-about-COVID-19>

Government of Canada: *Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19): Prevention and Risks.*

<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/prevention-risks.html>

Government of Canada: *Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) and Food Safety.*

<https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/food-nutrition/food-safety/covid19.html>

Appendix A

Temperature rules for safe cooking:

Meat, poultry, fish and eggs need to be heated to a high enough temperature for a long enough time to prevent harmful bacteria from multiplying. Cook food until its inside temperature reaches a safe temperature and then continue cooking for at least 15 seconds.

Required Temperatures for different foods:

Whole Poultry (chicken, turkey, duck)	82°C (180°F)
Poultry Pieces (chicken, turkey, duck)	74°C (165°F)
Stuffing in poultry	74°C (165°F)
Beef, veal, lamb or goat (pieces and whole cuts)	Medium Rare: 63°C (145°F) Medium: 71°C (160°F) Well Done: 77°C (170°F)
Pork or fresh cured ham (pieces and whole cuts)	71°C (160°F)
Beef, veal, lamb and pork ground meat and meat mixtures (burgers, sausages, meatballs, meatloaf, casseroles)	71°C (160°F)
Ground poultry	74°C (165°F)
Pork (pieces and whole cuts)	71°C (160°F)
Seafoods (fish, shellfish and other seafood)	70°C (158°F)
Egg Dishes	74°C (165°F)
Food Mixtures containing poultry, eggs, meat or fish (soups, stews, casseroles, stocks, gravy)	74°C (165°F)
Leftovers	74°C (165°F)
Hot dogs	74°C (165°F)

Taken from Ministry of Health and Long-term Care:

<https://bit.ly/2xh9IJ5>

Additional information on food safety can be found on Government of Canada website:

<https://bit.ly/3aUSkbG>

If you have more questions about food safety during COVID-19 Pandemic, please contact: Olga Bondar, Health Promotion Consultant at o.bondar@healthnexus.ca