

Information about the novel coronavirus COVID-19 for patients being tested and/or cared for in the community

Your doctor has determined that you can safely be cared for at home. To prevent the spread of contagious respiratory illnesses including novel coronavirus, we advise that you **self-isolate at home** until you receive your results.

What does self-isolation mean?

- Self-isolation means avoiding situations where you could infect other people. This means all situations where you may come in contact with others, such as social gatherings, work, school, child care, athletic events, university, faith-based gatherings, healthcare facilities, grocery stores, restaurants, shopping malls, and all public gatherings.
- You should (where possible) not use public transportation including buses, taxis, or ride sharing.
- As much as possible, you should limit your contact with other people. You should avoid having visitors to your home, but it is okay for friends, family or delivery drivers to drop off food.
- You can also use delivery or pick up services for errands such as grocery shopping.
- Non-essential hired household services should be avoided. (eg. cleaning, child care)

Samples are sent to Vancouver for testing and results will be available approximately 72-96 hours after collection. In some instances this may take longer.

To get your test results, please call 1-833-707- 2792 to speak with a nurse at least 72 hours after being tested. This line is available Monday to Friday from 8:30 AM - 4:30 PM.

You may stop self isolation after the nurse tells you your results are negative. If your results are positive, you will be contacted by Northern Health.

Below is some information about the novel coronavirus and how to care for yourself at home and protect others around you.

What is the novel coronavirus (COVID-19)?

Coronaviruses are a large group of viruses that cause illness ranging from the common cold to more severe diseases. Some coronaviruses spread between animals, some between animals and people, and others from people to people. [The novel \(new\) coronavirus \(nCoV\)](#) is a new strain (type) that has not been identified before in humans.

How is the novel coronavirus spread?

The novel coronavirus is spread from an infected person to others through:

- The air by coughing and sneezing
- Close personal contact, such as touching, kissing or shaking hands
- Touching an object or surface with the virus on it, then touching your mouth, nose, or eyes before washing your hands
- Contact with feces

The patient and all members of the household setting should follow good respiratory etiquette and hand hygiene practices (explained below).

- Please note: A face mask refers to a surgical/procedure mask. N95 respirator masks are not required by the patient or household contacts.

Respiratory etiquette:

- When coughing or sneezing, cover your mouth and nose with a tissue, face mask, or cough or sneeze into the bend of your arm, not your hand. Always wash your hands afterwards.
- If your mask gets wet or dirty with fluids, it should be changed immediately.
- Discard tissues and other materials used to cover the nose or mouth, in a plastic-lined container before adding it to other household garbage.

Hand washing:

- Wash hands regularly and carefully with soap and water for at least 20 seconds
- Wash all surfaces of the hands including between the fingers and under and around the fingernails
- Avoid touching your mouth, nose or eyes with unwashed hands to prevent infecting yourself or others.
- If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol. After applying the gel or foam, rub your hands together thoroughly until they are dry. This is an easy way to clean your hands as long as they are not visibly dirty.
- For more information on hand washing see HealthLinkBC File #85 [Hand Washing: Help Stop the Spread of Germs](#)

Home care for patients with novel coronavirus (COVID-19)

How to prevent the spread of coronavirus infection to household contacts or the community

The person who is sick should:

- Self-isolate while they are sick and not go to work, school or other public areas until they no longer have symptoms of the disease and are feeling well enough to return to normal activities and have been given permission by their health care provider to do so
- Limit their contact with others, as much as possible – this includes household members and visitors.
- Stay in a room by themselves, including sleeping at night if possible.
- Be separated from others in the household. If they cannot be separated, they should follow respiratory etiquette, especially while others are in the same room.
- Flush toilet with the lid down – the virus may also be present in stool.

People in the household should:

- Do not share toothbrushes, cigarettes, eating utensils, drinks, towels, washcloths or bed linen.

The household:

- Shared spaces (e.g., kitchens, bathrooms) should be kept well ventilated, if possible.
- Avoid handling items used or touched by the patient
- Dishes and eating utensils should be cleaned with soap and water after use.
- High-touch areas such as toilets, bedside tables and door handles should be cleaned daily using regular household cleaners or diluted bleach (one part bleach to nine parts water); clothes, handkerchiefs and bedclothes of the case can be cleaned using regular laundry soap and water (60-90°C). Use disposable gloves and protective clothing (e.g. plastic aprons, if available) when cleaning or handling surfaces, clothing, or linen soiled with bodily fluids.

How to care for the case in the home setting as safely as possible**For caregivers and others sharing the home environment:**

- If direct contact care (care that involves touching the patient) must be provided, the patient should wear a face mask and follow respiratory etiquette.
- The caregiver providing direct contact care to the patient should also wear a face mask and eye protection when within two meters of the patient and perform hand hygiene after contact.
- Masks should not be touched or handled during use. If the mask gets wet or dirty with fluid, it should be changed immediately. After discarding the mask, hand hygiene should be performed.
- Direct contact with body fluids, particularly oral, and respiratory secretions should be avoided. Use disposable gloves to provide oral or respiratory care, and when handling stool, urine and waste, if possible. Perform hand hygiene following all contact.
- Anyone who is at higher risk of developing complications from infection should avoid caring for or coming in close contact with the patient. This includes people with underlying chronic health conditions or weakened immune systems.
- Persons caring for a patient should limit their contact with other people as much as possible and monitor themselves for any signs of illness for 14 days from last close contact with the case and report new or worsening symptoms to a health care provider.

Where and when to seek medical attention

If you, the patient and/or your family or household members need additional care, contact your usual health care provider (e.g. family doctor) or call ahead and go to an urgent care centre or emergency department.