

Protecting against COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic is rapidly evolving and now requires immediate action by all of us. Public Health Agencies advise that cases will continue to rise quickly if we do not take action.

What is COVID-19?

The COVID-19 virus can cause illness ranging from a very mild, cold-like illness to a severe lung infection.

Symptoms can include:

- Fever
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Runny nose
- Muscle aches
- Headache
- Difficulty breathing

The World Health Organization advises that symptoms may appear in as few as 2 days or as long as 10 to 14 days after being exposed.

Shared Health Manitoba has developed a self-assessment tool to help people determine if they need further assessment for COVID-19. It is available at:

<https://sharedhealthmb.ca/covid19/screening-tool/>

How is COVID-19 transmitted?

COVID-19 is spread through an infected person sneezing, coughing or exhaling as respiratory droplets are released into the atmosphere, landing on nearby surfaces and/or another person. The person in close contact may then touch contaminated surfaces and then rub their eyes, nose and mouth before washing their hands.

The virus can be transmitted by:

- Breathing in droplets in the air that are generated when people cough or sneeze.
- Close contact with other people (e.g. shaking hands or hugging).
- Touching contaminated surfaces and then touching the face, mouth or food.
- Touching a contaminated surface and then touching another surface may cause the virus to transfer from one surface to another.

Protect yourself

Key prevention steps:

- Wash your hands often with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds.
- Avoid touching your face, eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Clean and then disinfect surfaces that are frequently touched.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with your elbow or tissue and throw tissue in the garbage after use.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Do not share food, drinks and utensils.
- Stay home if you are sick!
- Follow social distancing procedures!

If you have any symptoms, isolate yourself as quickly as possible and immediately call MB Health Links at 1-888-315-9257.

Information on COVID-19 guidance in Manitoba is available at:

<https://www.gov.mb.ca/covid19/index.html>

Protecting workers in the heavy construction industry

Safe work practices recommended for construction projects

- Emphasize proper hand washing practices by all employees at toolbox talks and orientations - lead by example, put up posters of proper hand washing techniques.
- Ensure that hand washing stations and, if possible, hand sanitizer are available for all workers.
- Frequently disinfect high-touch surfaces (i.e. doorknobs, handles, control panels) and eating areas with antimicrobial cleaners or bleach (one part bleach to nine parts water).
- Do not permit anybody to enter a worksite if:
 - They or a member of their household have traveled outside the country within the past 14 days.
 - They or a member of their household have exhibited symptoms of COVID-19 in the last 14 days.
- Do practice rigorous social distancing:
 - Ensure that all workers are able to maintain at least a two meter distance from one another at all times. If this does not allow you to complete a job safely, then the job should be delayed.
 - Ensure to minimize congestion in vehicles, only allowing 1 to 2 workers in a vehicle at all times.
 - Manage schedules to prevent groups from congregating. Try to minimize unnecessary physical proximity between workers - consider staggering breaks so people don't congregate in one place at one time.
 - Do not participate in any group meetings in which you are not able to maintain the recommended two-meter distance from participants. Do not hold or attend any event with more than 50 participants.
 - Use technology, such as a phone, Skype, or Zoom to avoid in-person meetings.
- Communicate and rigorously practice personal hygiene protocol.
- All workers should change their clothing and remove their shoes immediately upon arriving home.
- Prepare to suspend all non-essential operations. This situation is evolving rapidly and further restrictions will likely be required in the coming days, weeks, and months.
- Place informative posters telling people what to do if they get sick.

What else can we do?

The most important thing you can do to prevent infection is to wash your hands regularly and avoid touching your face.

To help reduce the risk of infection:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Using soap and water is the single most effective way of reducing the spread of infection. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand rub.
- Do not touch your face, eyes, nose or mouth with unwashed hands.
- Cover your mouth and nose with the crease of your elbow or a tissue when you sneeze or cough.
- Regularly clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces.
- Do not share food, drinks, utensils, etc.
- Stay home if you feel you are sick and follow your employer's policy.

For more information and guidance on responding to COVID-19, visit:

Health Canada - <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada.html>

Province of Manitoba - <https://www.gov.mb.ca/>