

Protecting against COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic is rapidly evolving and now requires immediate action by all of us. Public Health Authorities 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

Public Health Authorities advise that symptoms may appear in as few as 2 days or as long as 10 to 14 days after being exposed.

Manitoba Public Health 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 transmitted primarily through close, prolonged contact with a symptomatic/infected person.

COVID-19 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 30 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 physical 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

- Ensure daily health screening and documentation is conducted of all workers and visitors to construction sites. Refer to the WORKSAFELY COVID-19 Worksite Health Screening Tool. The key is to ensure infected persons or others with COVID-19 exposure risks are kept away from the workplace.
- Ensure that hand washing stations and, if possible, hand sanitizer are available and encouraged for all workers.
- Emphasize proper hand washing practices by all employees at toolbox talks and orientations - lead by example, put up posters of proper hand washing techniques.
- Frequently disinfect common surfaces (i.e. doorknobs, handles, control panels), washing and bathroom facilities and eating areas.
- Practice rigorous physical distancing, maintaining at least 6 feet (2 metres) distance at all times.
- If you are not able to maintain physical distancing, refer to the WORKSAFELY COVID-19 When Physical Distancing is Not Practical and Procedures for Use of Cloth Face Masks to Prevent Spread of COVID 19 documents to minimize COVID-19 transmission.
- Effectively communicate and reinforce COVID-19 prevention policies and procedures.

What else can we do?

The most important things you can do to prevent COVID-19 infection are to:

- Practice effective physical distancing (6 feet/2metres).
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Avoid touching face, eyes, nose or mouth.
- Cover your mouth and nose with the crease of your elbow or a tissue when you sneeze or cough.
- Do not share food, drinks, utensils, etc.
- Stay home if you feel you are sick and seek medical attention if necessary.

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://manitoba.ca/covid19/>

*** Advice from MB Public Health is continually changing as evidence is accumulated. We will continue to provide updates as required.**