

COVID-19 Public Health Recommendations for Hotels, Hostels, and Inns

Please visit our ahs.ca/covid for up-to-date recommendations and information.

GENERAL INFORMATION

What are the symptoms of COVID-19?

- People ill with COVID-19 infection have reported mild to severe respiratory illness with symptoms of cough, fever, fatigue, sore throat, runny nose, difficulty breathing and/or shortness of breath.
- While COVID-19 can cause serious illness, many people have only mild symptoms. It appears the illness caused by COVID-19 tends to be less severe than some other coronaviruses like the one that caused SARS.
- COVID-19 infection can be very serious for people with health conditions, such as diabetes, heart issues or breathing troubles.

How is COVID-19 spread from person-to-person?

- COVID-19 is spread mainly by coughing, sneezing or direct contact with a sick person, or contact with surfaces a sick person has recently touched.
- COVID-19 can also be spread where droplets (like from a cough or a sneeze) land on a surface which someone then touches. If that person puts their hands near their mouth, nose or eyes, the person may become ill.
- There is uncertainty about the possibility of spread from an infected person who doesn't yet have symptoms, but this is unlikely to contribute much to the spread of the virus.

PREVENTION

Environmental Cleaning

- Increase daily cleaning and disinfection of all common areas and surfaces. Pay particular attention to door knobs/handles, elevator buttons, light switches, surfaces in staff rooms, desktops, washrooms and other high touch surfaces. Additional disinfection should also be completed in high touch surfaces in guest rooms.

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- Cleaning refers to the removal of visible dirt, grime and impurities. Cleaning does not kill germs but helps remove them from the surface.
- Disinfecting refers to using chemical to kill germs on surfaces. This is most effective after surfaces are cleaned. Both steps are important to reduce the spread of infection. Do not mix cleaning agents and disinfectants together or use multiple disinfectants together.
- Use a disinfectant that has a Drug Identification Number (DIN) and a virucidal claim. Be sure to follow the instructions on the label to disinfect effectively. Alternatively, you can prepare a bleach water solution with 100 ml of unscented household bleach per 900 ml of water. When using the bleach/water solution, the surface must remain wet with the solution for at least one minute.
- Be sure to take the appropriate precautions when using chemicals for cleaning and disinfecting. Consult the products Safety Data Sheets and use PPE if required. Staff should be trained to remove PPE without contaminating hands.

Staff Health:

- Report respiratory illness to your employer and do not come to work for at least 10 days following the onset of cough, fever, fatigue, sore throat, runny nose, difficulty breathing and/or shortness of breath. Contact 811 if requiring further health advice and 911 if an emergency.
- Practice [social distancing](#) to reduce the risk of getting sick. Avoid close contact (within 2 meters), when possible, with other staff or guests.
- Ensure employee illness policy is up-to-date and communicated to staff.
- Encourage staff to avoid touching personal items of guests such as luggage, and to wash hands or use alcohol-based hand rub often and when they could be contaminated.
- If staff live in facility-provided housing, develop plans regarding isolation areas for ill individuals. If staff need to be isolated, they should be provided a separate room and bathroom where possible.
- <https://www.alberta.ca/assets/documents/health-self-isolation-information-sheet.pdf>

Food and Beverage:

- Although food has not been identified as a likely source of COVID -19 transmission, it is possible that an infected food handler could introduce the virus onto food by coughing, sneezing, or through direct hand contact.
- Food handlers must wash hands even if they have no disease symptoms:
 - Before starting work
 - Before handling cooked or ready-to-eat food

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- After handling or preparing raw food
- After handling waste
- After cleaning duties
- After using the toilet
- After blowing their nose, sneezing or coughing
- After eating, drinking, or smoking
- After handling money
- Food handlers should follow safe food practices such as protecting foods from contamination and minimizing direct handling of food and preventing cross contamination of foods.
- Discard any foods that may have been contaminated (including from coughs or sneezes).
- Clean and sanitize utensils and surfaces in the kitchen regularly using your regular sanitizing solutions (QUATs or chlorine).
- Follow respiratory hygiene by covering your mouth when you cough or sneeze and wash your hands afterwards.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.
- Complete frequent environmental cleaning and disinfection of any customer areas including bars, tables, or doorknobs (see section on environmental cleaning).
- Buffets and other self-service options should not be offered. Alternatives include plate service or portioning by staff.
- Avoid providing common water coolers or other lobby snacks to guests.
- Encourage customer hand hygiene before eating; provide properly stocked customer handwashing facilities and hand sanitizer stations where possible.
- Risk of transmission on dishware is low; dishes from meals can be washed/sanitized using regular procedures (sanitizing dishwasher).

Laundry

- Wear disposable gloves when handling dirty laundry and discard after each use. Clean hands immediately after gloves are removed.
- If possible, do not shake laundry (minimizes possibility of dispersing virus through the air).
- If possible, launder items using the warmest appropriate water setting and dry items completely.
- Clean and disinfect clothes hampers according to guidance for environmental cleaning; consider using a bag liner that is disposable or a liner that can be laundered.

Housekeeping

- Do not provide regular housekeeping service to rooms where individuals have been in isolation and ensure staff are advised not to enter rooms until authorized. Consider alternate means of assisting guests in isolation such as leaving fresh linens, toiletries and cleaning supplies outside the door during the period of isolation.
- Properly wash/sanitize any reusable glassware or dishes in rooms between guests (in commercial dishwasher) or provide disposable dishes and utensils in rooms.
- Once guests have left an isolation room, complete thorough environmental cleaning on hard surfaces with an approved disinfectant (see environmental cleaning section).
- Designate specific staff to clean potentially contaminated areas or complete cleaning/disinfection AFTER regular housekeeping. Provide appropriate PPE and review handwashing procedures.
- Launder any removable cloth/plush items.
- Steam cleaning can be used for areas which are likely to be contaminated but cannot be laundered (plush chairs).

Pool/Recreation Areas

- Based on the public health measures put in place by the Chief Medical Officer of Health to limit the spread of COVID-19 and protect Albertans, Alberta Health Services, Safe Healthy Environments is advising that all public swimming pools are to be closed at this time. This includes pools, whirlpools, wading pools and water spray parks located in but not limited to gyms, institutions, clubs, camps, spas, hotels/motels, condominiums and recreation centres.

Communication to Guests and Staff

- Recommend providing information including the following to staff and guests:
 - Symptoms of COVID-19 and reporting protocols
 - Contact for Health Link (811) if health advice is required
 - Posters regarding handwashing, prevention, and isolation;
 - [PHAC awareness posters](#)
 - [Help Prevent the Spread Poster](#)

Isolation Procedures

- Refer to the [ahs.ca/covid](https://www.ahs.ca/covid) website and, if needed, ask the guest/staff to call 811 for clarification on isolation.
- If isolated individuals are in staff accommodation or hotel rooms, meals or food should be delivered outside the rooms of staff/guests.
- Ideally, isolation would take place in a room that has an independent HVAC unit.

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- Keep track of number and status of guests and staff that are isolated and the reason for isolation (travel history, contact with ill individual, showing symptoms.)
- Advise isolated individuals not to use any common hotel areas including ice or vending machines.
- Hotel management should stay up-to-date on any travel advisories or isolation recommendations so that current advice can be given to staff and guests
<https://travel.gc.ca/travelling/health-safety/travel-health-notice>
<https://www.alberta.ca/self-isolation.aspx>