

novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)

FAQ for Home Care Clients

Important Information and FAQs for Home Care Clients re: COVID-19

COVID-19 is an illness spread via respiratory droplets (similar to influenza, MERS and SARS) or contact (e.g. contaminated hands to mucous membranes). Older individuals and people with medical co-morbidities, especially related to cardiovascular disease, chronic respiratory illnesses, diabetes and hypertension appear to be at the highest risk.

COVID-19 screening criteria has expanded to include anyone with fever and/or a cough or shortness of breath if they meet any of the following criteria:

<https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/assets/info/ppih/if-ppih-ncov-case-def.pdf>

What is novel coronavirus (COVID-19)?

- Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses.
- Some coronaviruses cause respiratory illness in people, ranging from common colds to severe pneumonias. Others cause illness in animals only.
- Rarely, animal coronaviruses can infect people and more rarely, these can spread from person-to-person through close contact.
- COVID-19 is a novel coronavirus that had not been detected previously in humans.

What are the symptoms of COVID-19?

- Symptoms for COVID-19 are similar to those for influenza or other respiratory illnesses. The most common symptoms include: fever, cough and extreme tiredness.
- Most people (about 80%) recover from this disease without needing special treatment.
- However, it can cause serious illness. Those who are older, and those with other medical problems are more likely to develop serious illness, which can include difficulty breathing and pneumonia.
- There is a risk of death in severe cases.
- While we are still learning about how COVID-19 affects people, older persons and persons with pre-existing medical conditions (such as high blood pressure, heart disease, lung disease, cancer or diabetes) appear to develop serious illness more often than others.

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

- COVID-19 is believed to be spread mainly by coughing, sneezing or direct contact with a sick person or with surfaces they have recently touched.
- 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.

Should I be worried about COVID-19?

- It is important to remember that the current risk in Alberta is low.
- AHS and Alberta Health are prepared for COVID-19 response in the province.

- We are carefully monitoring the situation and have taken the necessary steps to find cases and prevent the ongoing spread of the virus.

What do I do if I or someone in my household is experiencing symptoms?

You will be contacted prior to your home care visit to discuss your health status. If you or someone in your household is experiencing symptoms, call 811 and notify your case manager/service provider. You should remain at home and avoid public places.

What if I have to cancel my home care visit due to illness?

The first step is to call your home care office or service provider as soon as possible if appointments need to be cancelled due to illness. All clients should have a backup plan in place to ensure they can still receive the care they require.

I'm concerned about my caregiver being sick. What can I do to ensure my safety?

All our caregivers are trained in Infection, Prevention and Control, including hand hygiene and wearing the proper personal protective equipment to protect themselves and others.

If you have concerns, you can ask them to leave. We request that you call your case manager if this situation occurs. If you want to cancel home care services, ensure your backup plan is initiated.

I've been asked about a backup plan. What is this?

A backup plan is an alternative approach for your care. It is recommended you speak with both your case manager and family or other supports to determine how they can assist in providing care if a backup plan is required.

A backup plan should consider the following:

- Who can help care for me if I am sick or my home care provider is sick?
- How long can they provide care to me – consider a period lasting from one week to some months.
- Can my care be provided safely in my home?
- Can the frequency of care visits be reduced?

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, athletic events, faith-based gatherings, healthcare facilities, grocery stores, restaurants, shopping malls, and all public gatherings.
- You should not (where possible) use public transportation including buses, taxis, or ride sharing.

- 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.
- Avoid sharing household items such as dishes, drinking glasses, cups, eating utensils, towels, pillows, or other items with other people in your home. After using these items, you should wash them thoroughly with soap and water, place in the dishwasher or wash in a washing machine.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water and regularly clean and disinfect frequently touched and shared surfaces, such as doorknobs and counters.
- During this time, it is important that you monitor your health for symptoms like fever or cough, and call Health Link 811 if you have any concerns.

I am not having symptoms, but I'm concerned about COVID-19 and want to talk to someone. Should I call Health Link?

Please visit the following websites if you have general questions about what COVID-19 is, how it is spread, or how many cases there are in the world at present. You can call Health Link 811 if you have additional questions about what you need to do to protect yourself and your family against getting a COVID-19 infection.

[Alberta Health](#)

[Alberta Health Services](#)

[Public Health Agency of Canada](#)

[World Health Organization](#)