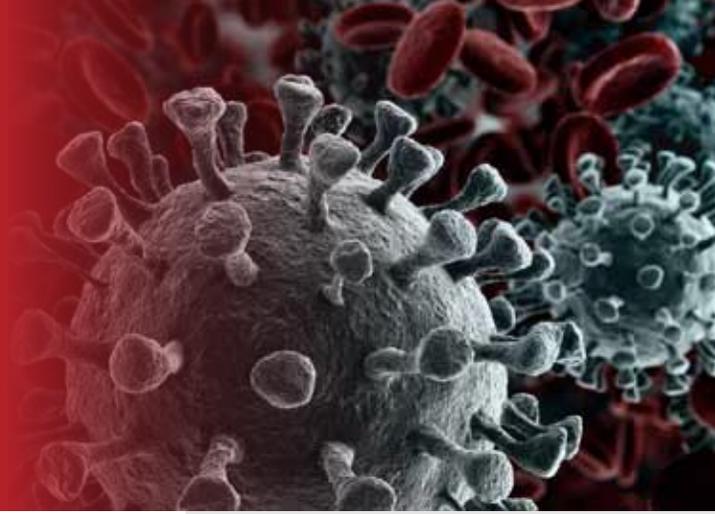


## Our COVID-19 response: How we are keeping you safe at home now and in the future



### CarePartners and COVID-19

Caring is at the core of everything we do. And now is no different. CarePartners continues to provide patients with safe and reliable home and community care services now and in the future, despite the COVID-19 pandemic.

We have made changes to our practices to limit the spread of COVID-19, in line with recommendations from the World Health Organization, Government of Canada, and federal and provincial health authorities.

Our top priority remains the health and safety of our patients, their family and our staff. We are committed to continuing to provide you with the quality care you need to remain safe at home.

#### What you can expect before and during a visit

CarePartners continues to follow – often *exceeding* – Public Health guidelines when it comes to how we are delivering care to patients during and after the pandemic.

We are **screening** all patients and household members for COVID-19 symptoms before each visit. This is done over the phone. If symptoms are present, we adjust our care delivery plan accordingly, aligned to Public Health guidelines.



Staff wear **personal protective equipment (PPE)** during every visit, whether it is in a clinic, retirement home or a patient’s home. PPE works to protect both the provider and the patient. Masks are discarded after each patient interaction in the **community** setting.

If a patient or household member has suspected or confirmed COVID-19 symptoms, a mask, goggles, gown and gloves are worn during visits, whether in a clinic, retirement home or patient home. This PPE is immediately discarded at the end of the visit.

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## Keeping you and our staff safe

Besides the careful, consistent processes we have put in place to ensure the safety of patients and staff during visits, we have made additional improvements to how we operate, including:

- Monitoring and tracking all potential exposure risks among patients and our staff, including mandatory self-isolation for staff returning from international travel, confirmed COVID-19 diagnosis and suspected COVID-19 exposure.
- Enhancing office cleaning, practicing social/physical distancing between work spaces and reducing in-person meetings.
- Educating staff on the most up-to-date guidelines and resources from Public Health and Ontario Health.
- Securing a sustainable supply of PPE for our staff; they have continued access to all the PPE they need to do safely do their jobs.
- Implementing video and teleconferencing technologies to deliver care virtually, helping to limit in-person contact. Read about our virtual care options below.

## Virtual care options

The pandemic has forced health care providers to think about new ways to deliver patient care, considering ways to limit in-person contact, where safe to do so. Through our **CarePartners Connect** app, we are able to continue providing care to patients who need it – in the safest way possible – through virtual channels. With virtual care, we bring **secure, quality** health care and social services to you – at home!



Virtual care means providing health care services and resources to patients, without seeing them in person. Virtual care services are delivered through mobile devices, such as cell phones, tablets and computers.

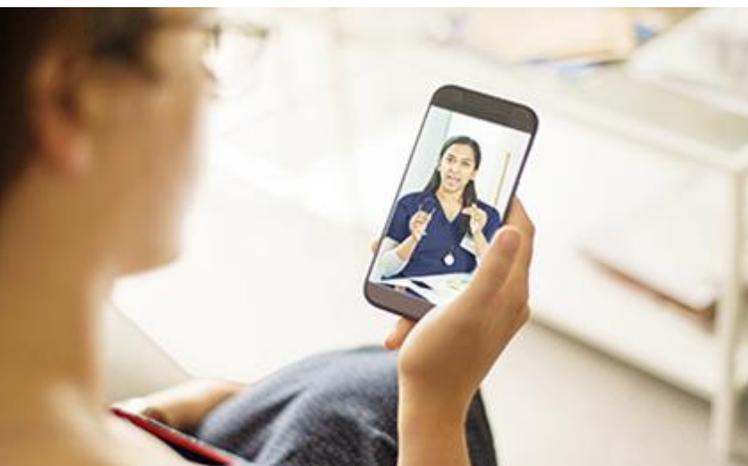
### **Virtual care services may include:**

- Videoconferencing consults or assessments
- Sharing educational resources
- Updating, viewing, tracking records
- Instant messaging
- Scheduling appointments

### **Benefits of virtual care:**

- Eliminates travel time to and between appointments for patients and providers.
- Reduces need to leave home for appointments for patients or caregivers who have mobility issues.
- Enables caregivers to participate in loved ones' care planning, no matter where they live.
- Gives patients more control in managing care and scheduling services.

If you are interested in learning more about **CarePartners Connect** and our virtual service options, please contact your provider or contact Tammy Rooke, Clinical Practice Specialist, at [tammy.rooke@carepartners.ca](mailto:tammy.rooke@carepartners.ca).



# Protecting yourself and stopping the spread

## Tips to stay safe at home and in the community

It is everyone's responsibility to continue to think about actions they must take to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

You can reduce your chances of being infected or spreading COVID-19 by taking some simple precautions:

- Regularly and thoroughly clean your hands with an alcohol-based hand rub (ABHR) or wash them with soap and water.
  - **Why?** Washing your hands with soap and water or using ABHR kills viruses that may be on your hands.
- Maintain at least two metres (six feet) distance between yourself and others.
  - **Why?** When someone coughs, sneezes or speaks, they spray small liquid droplets from their nose or mouth, which may contain virus. If you are too close, you can breathe in the droplets, including the COVID-19 virus if the person has the disease.
- Avoid going to crowded places.
  - **Why?** Where people come together in crowds, you are more likely to come into close contact with someone that has COVID-19 and it is more difficult to maintain physical distance of two metres.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.
  - **Why?** Hands touch many surfaces and can pick up viruses. Once contaminated, hands can transfer the virus to your eyes, nose or mouth. From there, the virus can enter your body and infect you.

- Clean frequently touched surfaces often, including phones, toilets, light switches, door handles, bedside tables, television remotes, countertops, microwave ovens, elevator switches. Ensure to follow manufacturer's cleaning guidelines and labels.
  - **Why?** While we know the virus survives on surfaces, it is not yet scientifically proven on *how long* the virus does survive on surfaces. However, enhancing cleaning in your home and other spaces contributes to limiting the spread and are good practices to adopt.
- Make sure you, and the people around you, follow good respiratory hygiene. This means covering your mouth and nose with your bent elbow or tissue when you cough or sneeze. Then, dispose of the used tissue immediately and wash your hands.
  - **Why?** Droplets spread virus. By following good respiratory hygiene, you protect the people around you from viruses such as cold, flu and COVID-19.
- Stay home and self-isolate even with minor symptoms, such as cough, headache, mild fever, until you recover. Have someone bring you supplies. If you need to leave your house, wear a mask to avoid infecting others.
  - **Why?** Avoiding contact with others will protect them from possible COVID-19 and other viruses.
- If you have a fever, cough and difficulty breathing, seek medical attention, but call by telephone in advance if possible and follow the directions of your local health authority.
  - **Why?** Your local health unit will have the most up to date information on the situation in your area. Calling in advance will allow your health care provider to quickly direct you to the right health facility. This will also protect you and help prevent spread of viruses and other infections.





## Learning about COVID-19

### How it started

On December 31, 2019, a cluster of pneumonia cases were reported in Wuhan, China. The cause was confirmed as a new strain of coronavirus, not previously identified in humans. Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses. Some cause illness in people and others cause illness in animals. The virus became known as COVID-19, which means “the coronavirus disease 2019.” On March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) assessed COVID-19 as a global pandemic.

### Risk factors

Most people infected with the COVID-19 virus will experience mild to moderate respiratory illness and recover without requiring special treatment. However, people with specific health circumstances are at an increased risk of more severe outcomes, including individuals:

- Aged 65 and over
- With compromised immune systems
- With underlying medical conditions (e.g. cardiovascular disease, diabetes, chronic respiratory disease, cancer)

### Looking after your mental health

The pandemic has affected families and communities on a scale no one could have imagined. We recognize the effects it has had on people’s mental health, too. We encourage you to take care of your mental health, just as you would your physical health, using the tips below. Mental wellbeing is extremely important to protect, especially during trying times such as this.

- **Avoid excessive exposure to media coverage.** Avoid unfamiliar websites, online discussion groups or social media sites, where people post information from non-credible sources or share stories which may or may not be true. For pandemic updates, refer to trusted, credible sources, such as the Ontario Health and WHO websites.
- **Stay connected (virtually) and ask for help/support if you need it,** whether it is from family, friends or colleagues.
- **Set aside relaxation time.** Relaxation techniques such as yoga, meditation, and deep breathing activate the body’s relaxation response, a state of restfulness that is the opposite of the stress response.
- **Exercise.** Whether it is a home workout, walk outside (at a safe distance from others), playtime with your children, or some other means to “get moving,” exercise helps improve overall mood, sleep, metabolism and more.
- **Get plenty of sleep.** Getting enough sleep can both help reduce the amount of stress we experience and prepare us to better manage stress.
- **Be kind to yourself.** Don’t be hard on yourself if you forget to do something or if you are not feeling better right away. Some of these options take practice.



## Symptoms

COVID-19 affects different people in different ways. Most infected people will develop mild to moderate illness and recover without hospitalization.

Seek immediate medical attention if you have serious symptoms (listed on the right). Always call before visiting your doctor or health facility. People with mild symptoms who are otherwise healthy should manage their symptoms at home.

Most common symptoms:	Less common symptoms:	Serious symptoms:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• fever</li> <li>• dry cough</li> <li>• tiredness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• aches and pain/ muscle cramps</li> <li>• sore throat</li> <li>• diarrhea</li> <li>• conjunctivitis</li> <li>• headache</li> <li>• loss of taste or smell</li> <li>• a rash on skin (for children)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• difficulty breathing or shortness of breath</li> <li>• chest pain or pressure</li> <li>• loss of speech or movement</li> </ul>

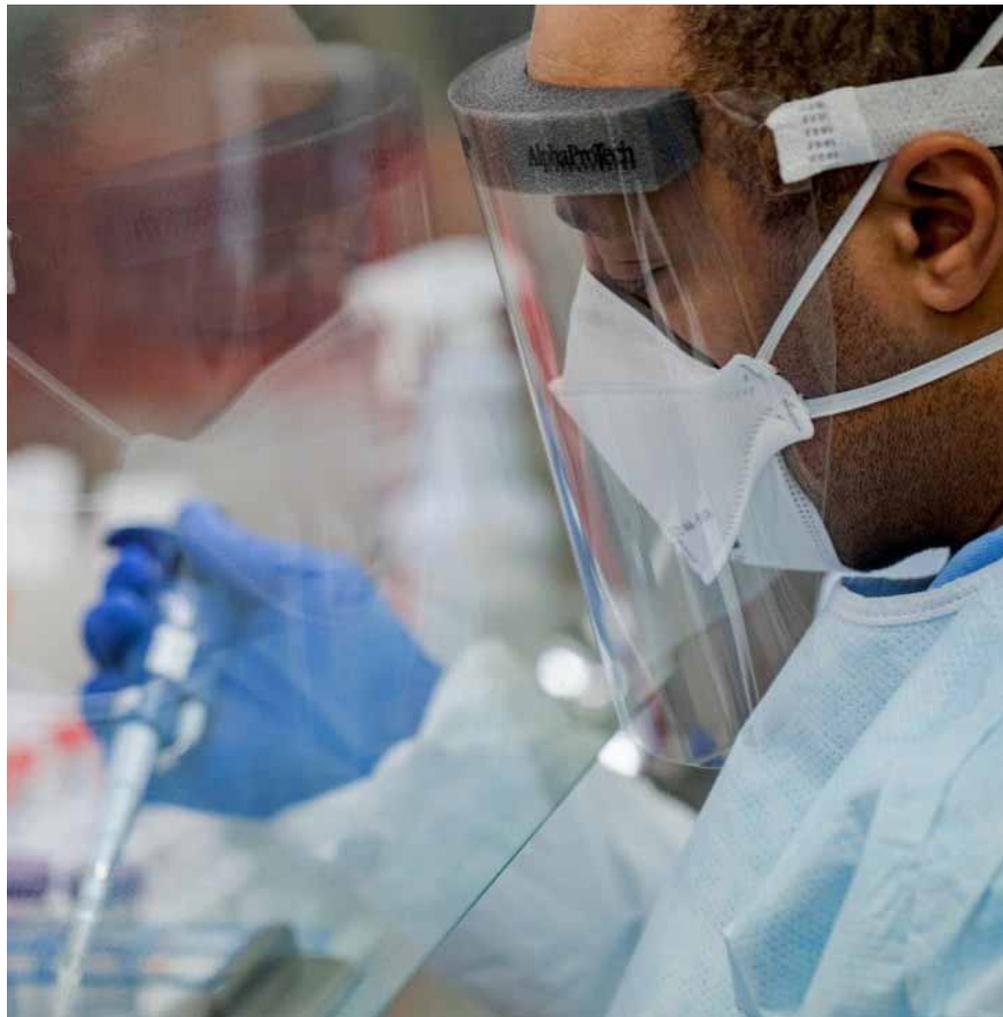


## Transmission, spread and diagnosis

Human coronaviruses cause infections of the nose, throat and lungs. They are most commonly spread from an infected person through:

- Respiratory droplets generated when you cough or sneeze.
- Close, prolonged personal contact, such as touching or shaking hands.
- Touching something with the virus on it, then touching your mouth, nose or eyes before washing your hands.

Current evidence suggests person-to-person spread is efficient when there is close contact. On average, it takes five to six days from when someone is infected with the virus for symptoms to show, however it can take up to 14 days.



Coronavirus infections are diagnosed by a health care provider based on symptoms and are confirmed through laboratory tests.

# Centre d'évaluation COVID-19 Assessment Centre



## Getting tested and reporting exposures

Visit an assessment centre to get tested for COVID-19. Contact your local Health Unit for information on assessment centres. You can also take a self-assessment to help you decide if you need a test at [www.covid-19.ontario.ca/self-assessment/](http://www.covid-19.ontario.ca/self-assessment/).

You can get tested for COVID-19 if you:

- Have at least one symptom of COVID-19.
- Do not have symptoms, but are worried you may have been exposed to COVID-19. This includes if you had close contact with a confirmed or suspected case.
- Do not have symptoms, but are at high risk of getting COVID-19 through your work (for example health care workers, grocery store or food processing plant workers).

The Ontario government continues to advise testing of individuals from specific high-risk priority groups.

If you have symptoms of COVID-19, you must self-isolate and should get tested. If you have any severe symptoms, such as difficulty breathing or chest pain, call 911 or visit the emergency department.

A negative test does not mean you cannot get infected with COVID-19 in the future. After you are tested, continue to follow measures to protect yourself and others.

## For more information

Provincial COVID-19 response information can be found at [www.publichealthontario.ca](http://www.publichealthontario.ca) or [covid-19.ontario.ca](http://covid-19.ontario.ca).

Federal pandemic-related information can be found at [www.canada.ca](http://www.canada.ca).

**If you have questions about your services or care plan,**  
please call your LHIN care coordinator or your local CarePartners branch.