HOW DO I PREPARE FOR MY HOME CARE VISITS **DURING COVID-19?**

Self-Screening

Health care workers entering your home will ask you a few questions to help understand if you and your family and friends are feeling healthy and well. Your answers help the health care worker to know what personal protective equipment, often referred to as PPE (e.g. mask, gloves, gowns and goggles), they need to bring in order to provide care safely and to let you know what to do if you feel unwell.

Health care workers self-screen before the beginning of their shift. The self-screening assessment makes sure that the health care workers are healthy and ready to provide care to patients. If a health care worker feels unwell before or during their work shift, they have to let their manager know and return home. Sick health care workers should not provide care to patients and should seek medical care as necessary.

Between visits, you and your family can also do your own self-screening anytime. Online websites or tools like the Canada COVID-19 application and the Ontario COVID-19 Self-Assessment are available.
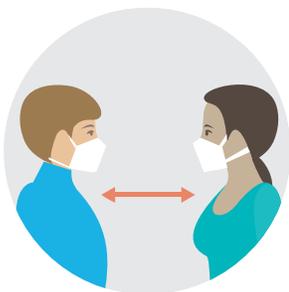
Physical/Social Distancing

Physical distancing means keeping our distance from one another and limiting activities outside the home. When outside your home, it means **staying at least 2 metres (or 6 feet) away from other people** whenever possible.

When a health care worker visits your home, you can help promote physical/social distancing by making sure your family is in another room. If you do need a support person, then this should be limited to one (1) person who should stay at least 2 meters from the health care worker, unless care requires closer contact (e.g. 2 person lift). The support person should also be wearing a mask if care involves close contact.

Hand Hygiene

Clean hands are the best way to prevent infections. The action of washing, rinsing and drying is the most important way to remove bacteria or germs that might be present. Use soap and water. If soap and water are not available, you can use a 70% alcohol hand rub to wash your hands. **Hand Sanitizer will not work if your hands are visibly dirty or not clean. You must wash your hands with soap and water instead.** The alcohol in hand sanitizer does not work if there are things like bodily fluids, food, and/or dirt present.

Ontario Health West

Other good tips include:

- Washing your hands before putting on and taking off masks.

- Making sure family and visitors wash or sanitize their hands when entering and leaving your home, and before providing care or preparing meals.

- Coughing into your elbow or a tissue instead of your hand. Throw out the tissue and wash your hands.

All health care workers entering and leaving your home must wash their hands or use hand sanitizer. If you did not see the health care worker do this, it is okay to ask them to make sure they did.

Masks

As of May 4, 2020, all home and community health care workers must follow universal masking rules. This means that any visiting worker coming into your home, must wear a procedure/surgical mask at all times during the home visit. The health care workers will bring their own procedure/surgical mask. Patients do not need to supply masks or any other protective equipment to visiting health care workers. They will also bring a mask for you to wear, if you don't have one. Patients and their support person can wear masks they have made or obtained themselves. This is especially important to consider for close contact activities. It is also important to learn how to wear a mask.

Cleaning High Touch Surfaces

Regularly clean things that are touched a lot such as door knobs, handrails, bathroom surfaces (including toilet handles and faucets), light switches, counters, remote control devices, phones and touch screen surfaces using a product that is compatible with the surface, according to the manufacturer. Clean the surfaces with soap and water when you can see that they are dirty. Use household cleaners and disinfectants on appropriate surfaces (check labels).
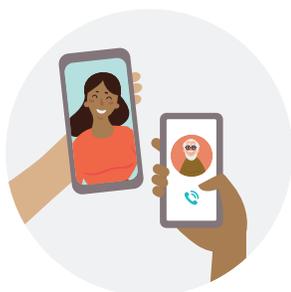
Virtual Care

As a way of reducing the spread of COVID-19, Home and Community Care is using virtual care, when it fits, so there are less people coming into your home. Your health care team will decide if virtual care is the right option for you based on their clinical judgment and what they know about your care needs. Virtual care is a way of you communicating with your health care worker without having to physically go in and see them. This way, there is less risk of you coming into contact with people who may be sick.

You may connect with them through:

- Phone calls

- Video conferencing – on your computer, laptop or tablet

- Email

- Remote monitoring – Telehomecare programs that use special devices that for example, can check your blood pressure or your weight

If you have any questions or concerns about any of this material or a specific situation in your home, please call your care coordinator.

COVID-19
RESOURCES

This document is based on advice from Public Health Ontario, and other authoritative sources as well as good general practices as of Oct 1, 2020 and is subject to change. Please refer to the most current information from your local public health unit.

COVID-19 resources for patients:

- https://covid-19.ontario.ca/self-assessment/ Ontario COVID-19 | **Self Assessment – On-line Questionnaire**

- https://www.thrive.health/canada-covid19-app | **Canada COVID19 app – Application for download**

- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sDUJ4CAYhpA&feature=youtu.be | **How to use hand sanitizer – Video**

- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o9hjmqes72I&feature=youtu.be | **How to hand wash – Video**

- https://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/documents/ncov/factsheet/factsheet-covid-19-hand-hygiene.pdf?la=en | **How to wash your hands and use hand sanitizer – Handout**

- https://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/documents/ncov/factsheet/2020/05/factsheet-covid-19-masks-not-healthcare.pdf?la=en | **Mask use for non-healthcare workers – Handout**

- https://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/documents/ncov/factsheet/factsheet-covid-19-how-to-wear-mask.pdf?la=en | **When and how to wear a mask – Handout**

- https://lambtonpublichealth.ca/2019-novel-coronavirus/protect-yourself/#face-coverings | **How to Put on and Take off a mask – Video**

- https://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/documents/ncov/factsheet-covid-19-environmental-cleaning.pdf?la=en | **Cleaning and disinfecting for public settings – Handout**

- https://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/documents/ncov/factsheet/factsheet-covid-19-guide-physical-distancing.pdf?la=en | **Physical distancing – Handout**

If you have COVID-19, or have been in close contact with someone with COVID-19, here are some additional reading materials:

- https://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/documents/ncov/factsheet-covid-19-self-monitor.pdf?la=en | **How to self-monitor – Handout**

- https://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/documents/ncov/factsheet-covid-19-how-to-self-isolate.pdf?la=en | **How to self-isolate – Handout**

- https://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/documents/ncov/factsheet-covid-19-guide-isolation-caregivers.pdf?la=en | **Self-isolation: Guide for caregivers, household members and close contacts – Handout**

Ontario Health
West