



Coronavirus COVID-19

BC Centre for Disease Control | BC Ministry of Health



Public Health Guidance for Community Volunteers During the COVID-19 Pandemic

July 20, 2020

As a volunteer and service provider offering non-medical services to seniors and others in community, you have an important role to play in preventing the spread of the COVID-19 virus. Below are guidelines about hand washing, cleaning, and physical distancing to use as you engage with seniors and others in your community. For additional information on COVID-19, please visit www.bccdc.ca/covid19.

1. If you're ill – stay at home

If you have symptoms that suggest COVID-19 or any other illness, it is important that you stay home and take care of yourself first. If you are at all unsure of your health status, use the BC COVID-19 Self-Assessment Tool <https://covid19.thrive.health/> to help assess whether you should be staying home or if you should be tested for COVID-19.

2. Practice Physical Distancing

It is important to keep the recommended distance between yourself and those you are visiting as much as possible.

- Avoid all close greetings like hugs or handshakes.
- Only enter a home if necessary, and only if both you and the client are feeling well. If you do enter a home, touch only the items and surfaces that are necessary.
- Within the home, maintain a 2 metre distance from household members as much as possible.
- When it is not possible to maintain safe physical distance, non-medical or cloth masks offer some level of protection and are recommended when working with vulnerable populations. If you choose to wear a mask, it is important to wash your hands before putting your mask on, and after taking it off. Cloth masks should be washed after each use, and changed if they become damaged, wet or soiled.
- If it is necessary for you to be in a close contact situation (such as driving someone to an essential appointment), keep as much distance between you and others as possible. Consider having the individual ride in the back seat, on the passenger-side away from you, and wearing a mask. Open the windows for ventilation whenever possible.



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If you have fever, a new cough, or are having difficulty breathing, call 8-1-1.



3. Practice good hand hygiene

Hands can pick up germs easily from anything they touch, and can spread those germs to objects, surfaces, food and people. Handwashing with soap and water is a very effective way to reduce the spread of illness. Gloves are not necessary; if gloves are worn, it is important to perform hand hygiene before gloves are put on, and after they are taken off. When sinks for hand washing are not available, use alcohol-based hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol. Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth with unwashed or gloved hands.

Seven steps to proper handwashing

1. Remove all hand and wrist jewellery.
2. **Wet** your hands with running water (warm or cold).
3. **Apply** soap.
4. **Lather and scrub** your hands with soap, covering all surfaces including the palm and backs of your hands, between your fingers, and under your nails for at least 20 seconds.
5. **Rinse** your hands well under clean, running water.
6. **Dry** your hands using a clean towel.
7. **Use** a towel to turn off the tap in public spaces.

If you are using alcohol-based hand rub, ensure your hands are not visibly soiled, apply about a loonie-sized amount of sanitizer and rub all surfaces of your hands until completely dry, about 20 seconds.

You should clean your hands:

- Before you touch your face.
- Before you enter a client's home.
- Before and after handling food or preparing meals.
- Before and after caring for someone who is sick.
- After handling items such as laundry or doing household cleaning.
- After handling garbage.

4. Cleaning and disinfecting

Regular cleaning and disinfecting of objects and high-touch surfaces with regular household products is important for preventing the transmission of viruses. Cleaning for the COVID-19 virus is the same as for other common viruses. Cleaning products and disinfectants that are regularly used in households and are commercially available are strong enough to deactivate coronaviruses and prevent their spread.

- In your car, clean and disinfect high-touch surfaces such as handles and seatbelts after each use with cleaning and disinfecting wipes.
- For other surfaces, use water and household detergents or common disinfectant products. These products are effective for cleaning and disinfection in home settings. General cleaning and disinfecting of surfaces should occur at least once a day.
- For more information, see the BCCDC website on [cleaning and disinfecting](#).

