

# Respiratory Illnesses



BC Centre for Disease Control  
Provincial Health Services Authority

Infections caused by a virus that affect the respiratory system (e.g. nose, throat, lungs)

**Examples:** Flu (influenza), COVID-19, RSV (respiratory syncytial virus)

## Symptoms



Shortness of breath



Sore throat



Runny nose/  
nasal  
congestion



Fever/  
chills

## Length of illness



Respiratory illnesses can last from a few days to a few weeks. Coughs can last even longer.



## How to prevent respiratory illnesses

**Hand Hygiene:** wash hands with soap and water or use hand sanitizer when:

- Hands look dirty
- After using the bathroom
- Before eating or preparing food

**Respiratory etiquette:**

- Cover your coughs with your sleeve or a tissue
- Throw away used tissues into trash right away
- Wear a mask when sick

**Avoid touching your face:** especially your eyes, mouth and nose

**Get your flu and COVID-19 vaccinations**

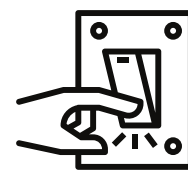
## How Respiratory Illnesses spread



From person to person (e.g. coughs, sneezes, singing, talking)



Crowded, closed spaces with poor air flow and ventilation.



Touching contaminated surfaces.

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## What to do if you are sick



Stay home or away from others if you are sick.



If you have to be near others, wear a mask and try and keep space between you and others



Clean your hands often and practice good respiratory etiquette.



Don't share items that touch the mouth (drinks, food, utensils, cigarettes, smoking supplies)

## Go to an urgent care clinic or emergency department if you:



- Find it hard to breathe
- Have chest pain
- Can't drink anything
- Feel confused
- Feel very sick

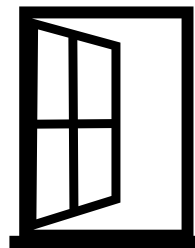
## Keep spaces safe

### Regularly clean and disinfect



Increase cleaning of high touch surfaces (door knobs, remote controls, light switches, railings, washrooms, counters, etc.)

### Open windows for ventilation



Open windows, if the weather permits, to encourage better ventilation

## Learn more

Call HealthLink at 8-1-1

Speak to staff if you have questions or concerns about respiratory illnesses at your site.