

Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

How To Care For A Child Who Needs To Self-Isolate

This fact sheet provides advice to parents and caregivers of children who need to self-isolate at home. This may include a child who has COVID-19, has symptoms of COVID-19, or has a known exposure to COVID-19. Some measures may not be possible or practical for all families.

Support the well-being of the child

Each child and family situation is different, but there are many ways parents and caregivers can support the physical and mental health and well-being of the child.

Ways to support the child who needs to self-isolate include:

- A parent or caregiver should continue to provide ongoing support and care for the child, including supervision to keep younger children safe in the home.
- Provide hugs and cuddles, but avoid direct contact with saliva or body fluids (e.g., avoid kisses).
- Talk to the child about any questions, worries or fears they may have.
- Find activities the child enjoys and is able to do independently, if they are able (e.g., crafts, puzzles, connect with family and friends online).
- Spend more time in a private outdoor space at home, if available (e.g., backyard or balcony).



Who should care for the child

- People who are at greater risk of serious illness from COVID-19 (e.g., older adults, people with some chronic health issues) should avoid caring for the child if another caregiver is available.
- Having one parent or caregiver care for the child, if practical, can reduce the risk of COVID-19 spread to other household members.

If the child has COVID-19, the local public health unit will decide how long household members need to self-isolate. This may be for additional time after the child's last day of self-isolation (e.g., for caregivers of the child with COVID-19).



Wear masks

- Masks should be well-fitted and cover the nose and mouth.
- Children must be at least 2 years old to wear a mask, and able to remove it.
- Give the child mask breaks where 2 metres distance from others can be maintained, if possible.
- Others in the same room should also wear a mask.
- Masks do not need to be worn when sleeping.
- If the child has COVID-19, the caregiver can wear a mask and eye protection (e.g., face shield or goggles).



Other ways to reduce risk of spread

- Clean hands and regularly touched items often (e.g., toilets, sink tap handles, doorknobs).
- The child who is self-isolating and their caregiver should limit contact with other household members as much as possible. This is particularly important if the child has COVID-19.
 - If possible, have separate meal times, and use a separate sleep, play area, and bathroom.
- If more than one person in the home has COVID-19, they can isolate together.
- In shared sleeping spaces, keep beds or mattresses at least 2 metres apart.
- Ensure rooms the child is using have good air flow (e.g., open windows if weather permits and if safe to do so).
- Limit sharing common household items and clean and disinfect between use.

For more information ...

- Contact your [local public health unit](#) or call 2-1-1
- For resources on supporting children and families during COVID-19, see:
 - Ontario Ministry of Health: [COVID-19 Fact Sheet: Talking to Children About the Pandemic](#)
 - Children's Mental Health Ontario: [COVID-19 Resources](#)
 - Canadian Pediatric Society: [Preventing Home Injuries in the Time of COVID-19](#)
 - Public Health Ontario: [COVID-19 Multilingual Resources](#)

Learn about the virus

To learn more and access up-to-date information on COVID-19, visit the Ontario Ministry of Health's website: ontario.ca/coronavirus.

The information in this document is current as of April 14, 2021