

Public Health Principles for Living with COVID-19 and Protecting the Most Vulnerable Citizens

Southwestern Public Health Recommendations FOR INDIVIDUALS

Last Updated: April 12, 2022

The pandemic is not over; COVID-19 is circulating in our community at one of the highest rates we have seen since March 2020. Take protective measures to reduce your risk of COVID-19 infection and to protect the most vulnerable.

Know Your Risk Factors

- Understand and consider your risk factors and the risk factors of those around you when deciding what safety precautions to take.
- Risk factors include advanced age, being immunocompromised, living with a chronic illness or taking an immunosuppressive medication and/or not having all recommended doses of the COVID-19 vaccine.

Stay Home When Sick

- Stay home if you have any symptoms of COVID-19. Complete the [Ontario Self-Assessment Tool](#) to verify the next steps, or visit [our website](#) for further guidance on what to do when you have symptoms of COVID-19.
- If you are sick, Rapid Antigen Tests (RATs) are available. Learn more about where to [get a free rapid test kit](#) and see our [Guidance for Rapid Antigen Test \(RAT\) Use](#)

Stay Up-to-Date with COVID-19 Vaccinations

- Vaccination protection decreases over time. Two doses no longer fully protect you. Please get [all recommended booster doses](#) to give your immune system a lift! Walk-in to any of our mass immunization clinics – appointments not required! To see dates, times and locations, visit www.swpublichealth.ca/covid19vaccine

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Treatment/Anti-virals

- People at the highest risk of severe illness or hospitalization can reach out to their primary care provider or a COVID-19 Assessment Centre for what is called an “anti-viral” treatment. Who is eligible?
 - Ages 70+
 - Ages 60+ with fewer than three vaccine doses
 - 18+ and immunocompromised OR with fewer than three vaccine doses and at least one **risk condition** (e.g., a chronic medical condition)
- Learn more about **anti-viral treatment, whether this is right for you** and where to obtain it.

Wear a Face Mask

- It is **strongly recommended** that you wear a well-fitted three-layer mask, medical mask or respirator in all indoor public settings. Masks reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission.
- Masks are **REQUIRED** in certain settings, such as health care and public transit. Masks are also required if you have **recently returned from travel**, if you or someone in your household recently **had COVID-19 or symptoms of COVID-19**, or if you have been identified as a **contact of a case**.

Gather Safely and Keep Your Distance

- Outdoor gatherings are safer than indoor gatherings. Indoors? Open windows and increase ventilation.
- Invite fewer people to reduce the risk of transmission; physical distancing helps a lot.
- Remind attendees to stay home when they are sick.

Wash Your Hands

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.