

Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

Preventing COVID-19 in People at Increased Risk of Severe Illness

This fact sheet is intended for people at increased risk of severe illness from COVID-19. It will help you determine what you can do to decrease your risk of exposure to COVID-19.

Your risk from COVID-19 increases with:

- Age, as you get older the risk increases, especially in older adults;
- Having a chronic medical condition including obesity, diabetes, lung/heart/kidney/liver diseases, stroke, high blood pressure, and conditions that weaken the immune system (e.g., some cancers, untreated HIV/AIDS);
- Conditions or taking medications that weaken the immune system (e.g., chemotherapy, oral steroid medications).

Take precautions

- Get fully vaccinated for COVID-19, plus a booster if you are eligible.
- Those at increased risk of severe illness can consider public health measures, even if not required and fully vaccinated, including: physical distancing, wearing a mask, avoiding crowded indoor and poorly ventilated spaces, and hand washing. For more information on masking, see Public Health Ontario's [Optimizing the Use of Masks Against COVID-19](#).
- Choose less busy times to use public transportation or go shopping. Use delivery services or ask others to pick-up food and supplies for you. If you use taxis or rideshares; wear a well-fitting mask, sit in the back seat, and open the window.
- Becoming ill with the influenza (flu) may lead to additional complications if you also get COVID-19. Get your annual influenza (flu) vaccine when it's available as an extra precaution.
- For more information on how to protect yourself from COVID-19, please see Public Health Ontario's [How to Protect Yourself from COVID-19](#).

Socializing with family, friends, and others

- To help prevent transmission of COVID-19 within your household, you and your household can take precautions when meeting with people who do not live with you.
- Consider waiting until you are fully vaccinated and have received your booster dose (if eligible) before coming into close contact with others.
- Visit with friends and family outdoors whenever possible. If you must be indoors, open windows and doors to improve ventilation.
- When participating in social activities, continue to follow public health guidance to limit the spread of COVID-19. This guidance will continue to evolve.
- Many people have experienced increased levels of stress, anxiety, and depression as a result of COVID-19. If you or a loved one have mental health concerns, contact your primary care provider.

Resources

- The Canadian Coalition for Seniors' Mental Health: [Tips for Battling Anxiety During this Public Health Situation](#)
- Ministry of Health: [Resources for Ontarians Experiencing Mental Health and Addictions Issues During the Pandemic](#)
- Canadian Cancer Society: [Cancer and COVID-19](#)
- About Kids Health: [Information for Parents of Immunocompromised Children and Children with Chronic Medical Conditions](#)
- Public Health Ontario: [Multilingual COVID-19 Resources](#)
- Ontario: [COVID-19 Public Health Measures and Advice](#)

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 7, 2022

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