



I think I have COVID. When should I call my doctor?



Most people with COVID can manage at home. You should:



✓ Rest.

✓ Drink plenty of fluids.

✓ For fever, headaches, and muscle aches: use over-the-counter pain and fever medications. Acetaminophen (Tylenol) is the best choice if you can take it.



✓ For a cough: try a teaspoon of honey (except if you have diabetes or if it is for a child under 12 months) or turn on a humidifier.

✓ For a sore throat: try lozenges or gargle with warm salt water.

✓ For mild discomfort when breathing: keep the room cool, open the window, try relaxation exercises and shifting your position.

If you have COVID, you must self-isolate. If you need care, you should not hesitate to call your doctor. Find out more about self-isolation at <https://bit.ly/3q4Eyxb>.

Call your doctor for an appointment if:

01

You have a medical condition that needs attention.

COVID can worsen medical problems such as diabetes, asthma, heart disease, lung disease, high blood pressure or other long-term conditions. If you get COVID and have one of those health problems, your treatment might have to change. Call your doctor if you are unsure about how to manage these conditions while you have COVID.

If pregnant, your risk of more serious illness from COVID increases. Call your doctor for advice and follow-up.

02

**You are over a certain age and/or have health problems.
You may need treatment or extra monitoring for COVID.**

Some people* are more likely than others to get seriously ill from COVID. If you are one of them, you should call your doctor to talk about possible treatments and extra monitoring. New treatments for COVID can reduce your risk of serious illness if taken within the first week of your symptoms starting.

* You should call your doctor if:

- ✓ Your health condition/s or medications weaken your immune system. That includes, for example, people with:
 - » Ongoing cancer treatments
 - » Previous organ or stem-cell transplants
 - » Rare genetic disorders like DiGeorge Syndrome that attack your immune system
 - » Advanced or untreated HIV
 - » Medications that weaken the immune system, including antimetabolites like methotrexate, biologic drugs that often end in 'mab', or high-dose steroids (Prednisone 20mg or higher)
- ✓ You are over 60
- ✓ You are over 50 and if you belong to one of the following groups:
 - » You are indigenous OR
 - » You have had less than 2 doses of a COVID vaccine OR
 - » Your last dose of a COVID vaccine was more than 6 months ago OR
 - » You have diabetes, obesity, serious kidney problems, intellectual disability, cerebral palsy or sickle cell disease.

03

You really are not feeling well or are struggling to care for yourself at home.

Contact your family doctor's office and ask to speak with someone immediately if you are not managing well at home. That could include feeling:

- ✓ Light-headed and dehydrated (for example, ongoing diarrhea may lead adults to feel extremely thirsty and/or produce less and darker-colored urine than usual)
- ✓ So tired it is hard to care for yourself or getting short-of-breath just from doing your usual activities
- ✓ Like you are recovering then getting worse again - pay close attention if that happens 5 to 8 days after first showing signs of COVID
- ✓ At a loss because you cannot access food or other essential supports while self-isolating
- ✓ Struggling with your mental well-being and not managing well at home

You do not need to call your doctor to report a COVID test result or get a doctor's note for your employer — that should not be required. Employers are not legally permitted to require a medical note.



Call 911 if you:

- ✓ Are short of breath while resting or if you are finding it harder and harder to breathe
- ✓ Have chest pain
- ✓ Notice from your at-home pulse-oximeter that your oxygen level dropped 3% from usual over 24 hours, or is below 93% at any time

Caring for a child with COVID

Most children become only mildly ill when they get COVID. If they do, make sure they drink lots of fluids to stay hydrated.

Call your child's regular doctor if you have questions about supporting your child when sick with COVID.

Call 911 or go to the emergency department if your child:

- ✓ Is less than 3 months old and has a fever (temperature >37.5 degrees)
- ✓ Is over 3 months and has a fever that has lasted more than 4 days, or if they have a weak immune system
- ✓ Is not getting enough fluids, has ongoing diarrhea, or can't stop vomiting
- ✓ Is showing signs of dehydration — dry mouth or tongue, sunken eyes, peeing less than usual, and producing no tears when crying
- ✓ Is unusually sleepy, not behaving like themselves or interacting normally
- ✓ Is working hard to breathe
- ✓ Is causing you to worry that your child is seriously ill

If your child develops a new fever, body rash or other worrisome symptoms a few days or weeks AFTER they have recovered from COVID, please contact your doctor. These symptoms could signal a rare complication from COVID.

Call 2-1-1 for help with food, money and housing.

Connex Ontario can help you find mental health and addiction supports. Call 1-866-531-2600, text 247247, or visit connexontario.ca/en-ca/our-services.

More detailed information on managing at home including how to use a pulse oximeter: <https://hfam.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Patient-Information-Long-Form-version-2021-05-19.pdf>