

# NOVEL CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)

Nova Scotia's health care system is actively monitoring and testing for potential cases of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19).

This work includes:

- establishing a patient screening process for use by front-line health care workers
- monitoring and investigating potential cases
- applying effective public health and infection control measures
- establishing working groups focused on disease surveillance, health system impact monitoring, models of care, supplies and resource management
- working with Nova Scotia's Emergency Management Office and other non-health partners on business continuity planning
- sharing accurate, up-to-date information with our partners and Nova Scotians

## GOOD HYGIENE IS THE BEST DEFENCE

There are currently no vaccines available to protect you against the novel coronavirus. Nova Scotians are encouraged to think about the actions they can take to stay healthy and prevent the spread of any respiratory illness, including COVID-19.

### Practice good hand hygiene –

#### Wash or sanitize hands often, particularly:

- Before and after preparing or eating food
- After touching pets
- After handling waste, dirty laundry or bathroom use
- Whenever hands look dirty
- After shaking hands

Washing with soap and water is preferred – rubbing hands together removes visible dirt and germs. Use disposable paper towels (preferred) for drying hands or a reusable towel that is laundered often.

If soap and water are not available (and your hands are not visibly dirty), use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol. Use enough to cover the fronts and backs of both hands, between all fingers and rub hands together until they feel dry.

## Use cough/sneeze etiquette

- Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue. Dispose used tissues in the garbage and wash your hands or use an alcohol-based hand rub immediately after OR
- Cough/sneeze into your elbow, not your hand

*Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands*

## Clean high-touch surfaces and objects often (at a minimum of daily or as needed)

Viruses can live on surfaces for several days. Frequent cleaning and disinfecting of high-touch surfaces and objects can reduce germs and prevent infection.

- Clean and disinfect items like doorknobs, light switches, railings, elevator buttons, toilets, desks and tabletops daily – wash using soapy water, then disinfect using household cleaning products (follow the directions on the label) or a solution of 1-part bleach to 9-parts water
- Disinfect phones, remote controls, computers and other handheld devices with 70% alcohol or wipes
- Wash or launder clothing, sheets and towels on a regular basis.
- Dispose of garbage on a regular basis. Wash hands after.

## MAKE A PLAN - BEING PREPARED IS GOOD ADVICE ANY TIME

- All Nova Scotians should have an emergency kit and basic supplies that you/your family may need for up to 72 hours. No panic-buying or stockpiling.
- Ensure prescriptions are filled.
- Think about what you will do if you or a member of your family becomes sick and needs care.
- Talk to your employer about working from home if you need to self-isolate or care for a family member who is ill.
- Communicate with family and friends. Let them know you're making a plan. Share yours with them. Check in on each other and run essential errands should one of you become ill.
- If you become ill, stay home until you are no longer showing symptoms.

## GET ACCURATE INFORMATION

The situation with COVID-19 is rapidly evolving. Find accurate, up-to-date information, including when to seek help at:

- **Province of Nova Scotia:**  
[novascotia.ca/coronavirus](https://novascotia.ca/coronavirus)

Other Resources:

- **Government of Canada:**  
[canada.ca/coronavirus](https://canada.ca/coronavirus)
- The Public Health Agency of Canada has established a new **Coronavirus Information Line: 1-833-784-4397**