Your Guide to Managing COVID-19 at Home

For patients going home from UHN who have COVID-19 or are waiting for COVID-19 test results

Read this brochure to learn more about:

- What to do before you leave the hospital
- What to do when you get home
- How to manage your symptoms
- Where to go for more information

Before you leave the hospital

1. Review the information in this package. Talk to your health care team if you have questions about this information.

2. Arrange for 1 family member or friend to drive you home.
   - Do not take public transportation such as the bus, streetcar or subway.
   - Take a taxi or car service if you cannot arrange a ride. Ask your nurse for help. You will need to pay for the ride.
3. Ask your health care team whether medications can be delivered to the unit, or arrange with your local pharmacy to have your medications delivered to your home.
   - **Do not** go to the pharmacy to pick up your medications.
   - Talk to your health care team at UHN to make arrangements to get your medicine. Be ready with the following information:
     - Your address and phone number
     - Your health card number
     - Your drug insurance plan information
     - Your credit card information, if available
   - Let your health care team know if you need help contacting your pharmacy.

4. Your health care team will give you a code to register for myUHN Patient Portal. This is a secure website where you can safely look at your health records. You will see your UHN appointments and test results as soon as they are ready. This includes your COVID-19 test results.
   - Call myUHN Support at 416 340 3777 or email myUHN@uhn.ca if you have questions about your myUHN account. Note: myUHN office hours are Monday to Friday, 8:30 am to 5:00 pm.

### Going home

**When you leave the hospital:**

- You get 2 masks.
  - Wear 1 mask out of the hospital. Do not remove the mask until you are inside your home. Follow the instructions on [How to take off a mask](#) below.
o Keep the other mask to wear if you need to return to the hospital.

- Meet your driver at the hospital’s patient and visitor entrance:
  o Toronto General Hospital: Elizabeth Street entrance
  o Toronto Western Hospital: Nassau Street entrance

In the car:
- Keep your mask on, making sure it covers your nose and mouth at all times. Do not touch your face or mask.
- Sit in the back seat.
- Open the car windows.
- If you take a taxi or car service, write down the taxi or car service company and the license plate of the car. Toronto Public Health may ask you for this information.
  
  Taxi or car service company: ________________________________
  
  License plate: ________________

- The person driving you does not need to wear a mask unless they have symptoms.

**How to put on a mask**

1. Clean your hands before touching the mask.
2. Check that the bendable strip is at the top. The white side should be facing you.

3. Hold the mask by the ear loops.

4. Place each loop around each ear.

5. Gently pinch the stiff edge on the top of the mask around your nose.
6. Pull the bottom of the mask over your chin.

7. Clean your hands after putting on your mask.

How to take off your mask safely

1. Clean your hands before touching the mask.

2. Hold the ear loops and lift the mask away from your face.

Do not touch your face or the front of the mask while removing it.
3. Put the mask in the garbage and clean your hands again.

What do I do when I get home?
The most important thing to do is to **self-isolate**. Self-isolate means to stay at home and avoid contact with others. Do not leave your home unless it is to see a health care provider.

Self-isolating stops the spread of germs and prevents others from getting sick. Your health care team will give you the “**How to self-isolate**” fact sheet for detailed instructions on how to self-isolate.

You can stop self-isolating when:

- It has been 14 days or more since your symptoms started
  
  AND

- Your symptoms are better and you do not have a fever

If your symptoms are not better after 14 days from when they started, continue to self-isolate and contact the Connected COVID Care Virtual Clinic:

- Phone: 437 488 1650

- Email: [COVIDcare@uhn.ca](mailto:COVIDcare@uhn.ca)

Note: the clinic is open Monday to Friday, 8:00 am to 4:00 pm.
I live with other people. What do they need to do?

If you have tested positive or are waiting for your results, your caregivers, household members, and close contacts also need to self-isolate for **14 days** from when your symptoms started. If one of your contacts develops symptoms, they can call the Toronto Public Health COVID-19 Hotline for advice at 416 338 7600.

The people you live with need to prepare your home to avoid spreading the virus. If possible, before you get home, they need to:

- Make sure there is soap at home for hand washing.
- Get face masks or scarves to cover the nose and mouth and wear them when they are close to you.
- Set up a separate bedroom and bathroom for you if possible.

Your health care team will give you the “**Self-isolation: Guide for caregivers, household members, and close contacts**” handout which explains what members of your house need to do when you get home.
How will I feel? What should I do if my symptoms get worse?

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<tr>
<th>Smiley</th>
<th>What to expect once I’m home</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I may still have symptoms such as:</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Fever (over 38 °C or 100.4 °F)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Dry cough</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Sore throat</td>
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<td>- Muscle aches</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Headache</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Feeling tired for a few weeks</td>
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<td>- Nausea, diarrhea, and decreased appetite</td>
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**Take these actions:**

1. Take your medicine as instructed by your health care team
2. Drink lots of fluid throughout the day
3. Get rest
4. For cough and shortness of breath:
   - Use a humidifier or hot shower to help your cough
   - Use pursed lip breathing to slow down your breathing and open your airways. Slowly breathe in through your nose, then slowly breathe out through your mouth while tightly pressing (pursing) your lips.
5. Quitting or reducing smoking, vaping, and drug use can help lower your risk of developing severe symptoms
Watch for these symptoms

- My fever is still over 38°C (100.4 °F) even when I take medication
- My breathing is getting worse (it’s harder than normal to breathe or catch my breath)
- My cough is getting worse, and I am coughing up mucus that is green, yellow, bloody, or smells bad
- I have chest pain when coughing

Take these actions:

1. Contact the Connected COVID Care Virtual Clinic:
   - Phone: 437 488 1650
   - Email: COVIDcare@uhn.ca
   Note: the clinic is open Monday to Friday, 8:00 am to 4:00 pm.
2. Watch your symptoms closely to see if they are getting worse

Watch for these signs of an emergency

- I have trouble breathing during simple tasks like walking across a room or talking
- I have chest pain that does not go away
- I feel confused
- I feel very drowsy, weak, or dizzy

Take these actions:

1. Call 911 or go to your nearest Emergency Department
2. Wear a mask and tell the 911 operator or triage nurse at the hospital that you have been tested for COVID-19.

Do not drive yourself or take public transportation to the hospital.
Who will follow up with me after I leave the hospital?

If you have tested positive for COVID-19:

The Connected COVID Care Virtual Clinic will follow up with you.

1. After you leave the hospital, you will receive a check-in call the next business day between 8:00 am to 4:00 pm.

2. You will be scheduled for a virtual appointment with a nurse practitioner and/or doctor. This appointment will happen anywhere from 1 to 5 days after you leave the hospital. For more information about virtual appointments, please refer to the Virtual Visits at UHN brochure.

You can also safely access your COVID-19 test results through the myUHN Patient Portal secure website as soon as they are available.

If you have tested negative for COVID-19:

You will not be followed up. We are only calling patients who have tested positive at this time.

Continue to self-isolate for at least 14 days from when your symptoms started AND until you are symptom-free for at least 48 hours. It is important to still stay at home and avoid non-essential contact with others. Even though your test says the virus was “not detected”, it is possible that you were tested early in your infection and could test positive later.

If you test negative, your caregivers, household members, and close contacts can stop self-isolating unless they have symptoms. If they have symptoms, they will also need to self-isolate for at least 14 days from when their symptoms started AND until they are symptom-free for at least 48 hours.
How can I manage feeling nervous and worried about COVID-19?

It is normal to feel nervous and worried about COVID-19. Knowing this and paying attention to your mental health is important.

Stress during an infectious disease outbreak can include:

- fear and worry about your own health and the health of your loved ones
- changes in sleeping or eating patterns
- difficulty sleeping or concentrating
- worsening of chronic health problems
- increased use of alcohol, tobacco or other drugs

Take care of yourself, your friends and your family to help cope with stress. There are services available to help. Contact 211 Ontario using the information below if you need information on mental health support services.

211 Ontario

211 is a telephone helpline and online database of Ontario’s community and social services. The service is free and confidential. It is available whenever you need support.

- Do you feel overwhelmed or anxious about COVID-19? Do you want information on mental health services to manage those feelings?
- Do you have money needs because of self-isolation measures?
- Do you have questions about applying for Employment Insurance?
- Do you need help getting groceries or running errands while you are at home sick or self-isolating?
211 calls, chats and emails are answered by caring and professional staff who can help you understand and access programs available to you.

1. **Speak with them by phone.** Dial 2-1-1 on your cell phone or home phone. Available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and in 150 languages.

2. **Chat with them online.** Visit [www.211ontario.ca](http://www.211ontario.ca) and click the ‘Live Chat’ button. Available 7am to 9pm Monday to Friday.

3. **Search their online listing.** Visit [www.211ontario.ca](http://www.211ontario.ca) and search by location and topic. We regularly add new programs, services and financial supports to the listing as we learn about them.

**Where can I get more information on COVID-19?**

Please visit Toronto Public Health’s website for up-to-date COVID-19 information: [https://www.toronto.ca/home/covid-19/](https://www.toronto.ca/home/covid-19/)

You can visit the UHN COVID-19 webpage to find up-to-date information about UHN policies: [https://www.uhn.ca/covid19](https://www.uhn.ca/covid19)