

COVID-19 FAQ's*

What is COVID-19?

COVID-19 is a new form of coronavirus first identified in December 2019. Coronaviruses in general are not new and are a common cause of colds and upper respiratory infections. We don't yet know why this new form, COVID-19, appears to be more transmissible.

How is COVID-19 spread?

COVID-19 is thought to spread mainly person-to-person, through respiratory droplets in coughs or sneezes. It can live on surfaces as well through these droplets.

What is the time period when COVID-19 can spread?

Unfortunately, people can spread infection to others before symptoms first appear. It can then be spread for up to 14 days after symptom onset (possibly longer).

What are the symptoms of COVID-19?

The majority of people experience mild illness, but severe illness and death can occur. Fever, cough and shortness of breath are the most common symptoms.

How is COVID-19 treated?

As of right now, there are no current vaccines, or anti-viral treatments to use when someone is acutely infected. Treatment relies on supportive care to treat symptoms when they occur.

When should I seek emergency care?

Seek immediate medical attention if you have difficulty breathing, persistent chest pain or pressure, sudden confusion or inability to stay awake. These are not the only reasons someone may need emergency care – call your doctor for other concerns. Call any emergency department or medical provider BEFORE arrival to allow them to put precautions in place.

Can I get tested for COVID-19 at your office?

Please call your doctor's office with any questions or visit: <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection.html>; or contact your provincial chief medical officer of health. You can also check with your local public health agency. Many locations are offering free screening clinics.

When should I cancel my regularly scheduled allergy appointment?

Some non-urgent visits may be cancelled for you. If your visit hasn't been canceled, please call to your doctor's office to discuss any specific concerns prior to arrival, especially if you have had recent travel to high risk countries or contact with anyone with known/suspected COVID-19. Also call before arrival if you have had fever/cough in the past two weeks.

Is it safe to come to your office?

Doctor's offices are taking all recommended precautions to prevent spread of COVID-19, including reassessing what care must be done in a face-to-face manner, screening all patients and accompanying family members, regularly disinfecting exam rooms and public areas, and

staying up to date with current recommendations from the local or provincial Department of Public Health.

I'm getting allergy shots – what should I do?

Please contact your doctor's office.

Will your office be closing?

Please contact your doctor's office.

What if I have asthma? How will COVID-19 affect me?

We don't have a lot of information regarding risk of asthma exacerbation with COVID-19. For now, we recommend continuing all currently prescribed daily asthma medications, calling your doctor's office if you have had frequent symptoms or needed your rescue inhaler more often, and starting your asthma treatment plan as soon as possible if symptoms occur.

Are steroids harmful if someone has COVID-19?

It does not appear that inhaled steroids or short courses of oral steroids are harmful for treatment of asthma if someone has COVID-19. The risk of stopping regular use of inhaled steroids includes a loss of asthma control and possible need for treatment with oral steroids. Please do not stop any medications without discussing with your doctor.

I have an immune deficiency – what precautions should I take?

Please contact your doctor directly to discuss any necessary precautions. There are a wide range of immune deficiencies that may have different risk. All general precautions should be followed as outlined above.

*EXCERPT from article: **Special Article: COVID-19: Pandemic Contingency Planning for the Allergy and Immunology Clinic** https://csaci.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/COVID19_CSACI-FINAL-new-clean_epi_ems_addendum.pdf