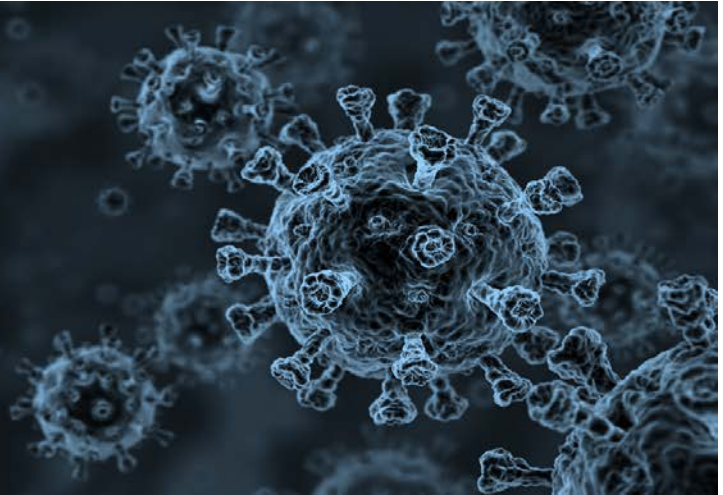




# COVID-19: PRECAUTIONS WHEN WORKING AS A CHILDCARE PROVIDER



## OVERVIEW

A new type of coronavirus, abbreviated [COVID-19](#), is causing an outbreak of respiratory (lung) disease. The severity of this illness can vary from person to person. There are, however, steps you can take to prevent the spread of infection. This document provides important information to help protect workers during the COVID-19 Pandemic.

When faced with workplace hazards, organizations should apply a systematic approach to control them. This approach is often called RACE- Recognize, Assesses, Control and Evaluate. RACE is a framework that can be applied to all workplace hazards and is proven to be a highly effective hazard management tool.

## PROTECTING YOURSELF AND CO-WORKERS

The virus typically spreads through coughing and sneezing, personal contact with an infected person, or touching an infected surface and then face – mouth, nose or eyes. Here is some general guidance and [helpful tips](#) to help prevent the spread of germs:

- Maintain physical distancing of at least 2 metres (6 feet) or more between persons, including clients and co-workers.
- Promote good hygiene such as:
  - [Wash your hands](#) often with soap and water when hands are visibly soiled, before and after any breaks, at the beginning and end of their shift, and before preparing food or use alcohol-based hand sanitizer (with greater than 70% - 90% alcohol content) if hand washing is not possible.
  - Sneeze and cough into your sleeve.
  - If you use a tissue, discard immediately and wash your hands afterward.
  - Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.
  - Avoid high-touch areas, where possible, or ensure you clean your hands after.
- Practice regular cleaning and disinfection



- Minimize contact with people who are sick
- Stay home if you are sick.
- Where possible, wear [gloves](#) when interacting with high-touch areas. Do not touch your face with gloved hands. Take care when removing gloves. Ensure you wash your hands after removing them.
- Wash your clothes as soon as you get home.
- If you have symptoms or you think you were exposed to COVID-19, notify your supervisor immediately, complete the [self-assessment](#) and follow the instructions you get.

## RECOGNIZE AND ASSESS

According to the [Government of Ontario](#), symptoms can appear in as little as a few days or as long as 14 days after being exposed to someone with the disease. [COVID-19](#) can cause a range of symptoms including fever, cough, muscle aches, fatigue, headache, sore throat, runny nose and shortness of breath.

For some people, the symptoms are like having a cold; for others they are quite severe or even life threatening. It is important to check with your healthcare provider, or Telehealth Ontario at 1-866-797-0000, or local Public Health Unit and follow instructions about [staying home](#) or away from public spaces to prevent the spread of the virus.

The virus typically spreads through coughing and sneezing, personal contact with an infected person, or touching an infected surface and then the face - mouth, nose, or eyes.

Close contact with a potentially infected person or touching potentially contaminated items (such as tables, door handles, hard surfaces or linens etc.) are likely to pose the greatest exposure risks. Also, contact with other people increases the risk of exposure to someone who may be infected.

All individuals, including children, parents/guardians and staff must be screened upon arrival. Entry to any person including the child of a parent/guardian who does not pass screening must be denied.

## CONTROL

1. Follow the requirements set out in the [Occupational Health and Safety Act](#) (OHSA) as well as policies and procedures, including infectious disease preparedness and response plans established by your employer

All workplace parties have roles and responsibilities to protect workers from hazards in the workplace as set out in the OHSA and its regulations, and the applicable directives coming from the Chief Medical Officer of Health.

Workers should raise any concerns to their:

- Supervisor
- Joint Health and Safety Committee or Health and Safety Representative

Under [Subsection 28\(1\)](#) of the OHSA, workers have a duty to:

- Work in compliance with the provisions of the Act and regulations



- Use or wear the equipment, protective devices or clothing that the worker's employer requires to be used to worn
- Report to his or her employer or supervisor the absence of or defect in any equipment or protective device of which the worker is aware and
- Report to his or her employer or supervisor any contravention of the Act or Regulations or the existence of any hazard of which he or she knows.

Under the OHSA, employers have the duty to take every precaution reasonable in the circumstances to protect workers from hazards in the workplace. Workers have [right to refuse unsafe work](#). If health and safety concerns are not resolved internally, a worker can file a complaint with the Ministry's Health and Safety Contact Centre at 1-877-202-0008. Failure of the employer to comply with the OHSA and its regulations could result in enforcement action such as an order to comply, which may include a [stop-work order](#), upon inspection by the Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development.

In addition, infectious disease preparedness and response plans established by the employer should be followed. The plan considers and addresses levels of risk associated with the workplace and job tasks. This includes how the workplace will [operate](#) during the COVID-19 outbreak including but not limited to health and safety considerations such as sanitization of workplaces, how workers and employers [report illnesses](#), how to ensure physical distancing, and how work will be scheduled.

2. Maintain [physical distancing](#). Physical distancing generally means maintaining a distance of at least 2 meters (6 feet) or more between persons at all times. By maintaining physical distancing, people are less likely to be exposed to a respiratory virus as the virus can be spread before symptoms appear (pre-symptomatic) and when the person may have contracted the virus but are minimal or no symptoms (asymptomatic).
  - Encourage physical space between children by spreading children out into different areas; staggering or alternating lunchtime and outdoor playtime and incorporating more individual activities or activities that encourage more space between children
  - Do not use water or sensory tables
  - Do not use community playgrounds; however outdoor play at licensed childcare sites is encouraged in small groups which facilitate physical distancing (check with local public health unit regarding use of playground equipment onsite)
  - Increase distance between nap mats or if space is tight place children head to toe or toe to toe. [Cots and cribs should be disinfected](#) after each use
  - If unable to maintain physical distancing workers can use a [non-medical mask](#) to protect those around them
  - Limiting the total number of people at the workplace and where they are assigned to work
  - Consider implementing a system for virtual and/or telephone consultations when and where possible
  - Non-essential face-to-face appointments should be postponed or converted to virtual appointments
  - Have staff work from home whenever possible (i.e. administrative staff)
  - Staggered start times, breaks and lunches



- Restricting visitors and limiting workplace entry to only essential personnel
  - Suspending all group activities and gatherings
  - Alter the workplace layout of the floor by moving furniture or using visual cues such as tape on the floor to enhance physical distancing
  - Lunchrooms and break rooms must be arranged to follow physical distancing practices. Consider staggered lunch and break times to reduce the number of employees gathering.
3. Follow specific guidance for health and safety and infection prevention and control practices and measures and procedures established by the employer.
- Refer to the [Ministry of Health](#), [Public Health Ontario](#) and the [Government of Canada](#) for COVID-19 Guidance
  - Ensure all toys used at the centre are made of material that can be cleaned and disinfected
  - In addition to routine cleaning, [clean frequently](#) touched surfaces (i.e. door handles, handrails, toys, touch screens, elevator buttons, etc.) using cleaning products registered in Canada with Drug Identification Number (DIN) and labelled as a broad-spectrum viricide at least twice daily and when soiled.
  - Follow manufacturer's instructions and Safety Data Sheet requirements for proper use of cleaning and disinfecting products. Particular attentions should be paid to contact time, dilution, material compatibility, shelf-life, storage, first aid, and PPE.
  - Cleaning equipment itself requires careful and regular cleaning and disinfection to avoid inadvertent cross-transmission of microorganisms during subsequent use. If equipment barriers are used, ensure they are removed and discarded between uses.
  - When an employer determines personal protective equipment (PPE) is for contact/droplet precautions (gown, gloves, mask/respirator and eye protection), workers must be trained on its use, care, limitations and fit testing must be completed if respirators are required.
  - When holding infants and toddlers use blankets or cloths over childcare providers clothing and change the blankets or cloths between children.
  - Linens must be laundered between children
  - Children must not share food, soothers, bottles, sippy cups, toothbrushes, facecloths etc. Label these items with the child's name to discourage accidental sharing
  - Pick up and drop off of children should happen outside the childcare setting unless there is a determined need for the parent/guardian to enter the sitting
  - Proper donning and doffing of PPE and hand hygiene should be performed.
4. Stay home if you are feeling ill. Actively [monitor yourself](#) for any symptoms and if you detect symptoms, you should immediately distance yourself from others and go home. If possible, avoiding using public transit to get home. Notify your supervisor so that they are aware of the situation and can also notify others who may have been exposed.
5. Demonstrate the following precautionary measures while working:



- Symptomatic children should be separated from others in a supervised area until they can go home and where possible anyone who is providing care to the child should maintain a distance of 2 metres; environmental cleaning of this space should take place following pick up of child
- Do not report to work if you are exhibiting any of the [symptoms](#) or are under [self-isolation](#) or quarantine
- Limit the amount of face-to-face contact during work activities and [practice physical distancing](#) whenever possible.
- Use technology for communication (text messaging and mobile phones rather than in-person conversations)
- Avoid sharing equipment/supplies where possible. Disinfect regularly if sharing cannot be avoided
- Limit any casual interactions that normally occur at work
- Change out of work clothing at the end of each shift and wash them. Do not store your street clothes and work clothing in the same space unless both are clean
- Consider discussing any underlying medical conditions that might place you at a higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19 with your Human Resources Department
- Work with your manager and dispatch to establish flexible work hours or alternative hours where possible.

Additionally, the COVID-19 outbreak is a unique and unprecedented scenario for many workers. Ensure you are taking care of both your mental health and psychological well-being, as well as your physical health, during this time. Find out [helpful tips and coping strategies](#).

6. Practice stringent hand hygiene practices. Health Canada recommends following basic hygiene practices:
- Wash hands frequently
  - Thoroughly [wash hands](#) with soap and water for at least 20 seconds
  - If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based [hand sanitizer](#) containing at least 70% - 90% alcohol preferred
  - Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth
  - Practice respiratory etiquette and sneeze or cough into your sleeve or a tissue and discard it
  - Use a clean tissue or your knuckle/elbow to touch light switches, doors, buttons, etc.

## EVALUATE

Ask and evaluate:

- Were the proper hygiene facilities (soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizer) available to you?
- Were you able to practice physical distancing?
- Are you disinfecting (i.e. disposable wipes) frequently touched surfaces routinely?
- Did you use or wear the PPE that your employer requires you to use or wear to protect you while you do your job?
- Have you been provided training on the proper use of PPE and the limitations of the PPE?
- Do you know what to do if you have symptoms of COVID-19?



### **SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOL:**

<https://covid-19.ontario.ca/self-assessment/#q0>

### **CHILDCARE GUIDANCE**

[http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/publichealth/coronavirus/docs/2019\\_child\\_care\\_guidance.pdf](http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/publichealth/coronavirus/docs/2019_child_care_guidance.pdf)

### **TAKING CARE OF YOUR MENTAL HEALTH DURING COVID-19**

<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/publications/diseases-conditions/taking-care-mental-health.html>

### **TO CONTACT YOUR LOCAL PUBLIC HEALTH UNIT:**

<http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/common/system/services/phu/locations.aspx>

### **FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION, REFER TO HEALTH CANADA'S WEBSITE ON COVID-19**

<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/being-prepared.html?topic=tilelink>

### **FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT:**

- <https://www.ontario.ca/page/2019-novel-coronavirus> (Ontario COVID-19 webpage)
- [www.pshsa.ca/covid-19](http://www.pshsa.ca/covid-19)