

## New Parent With COVID-19: Care Instructions



### Overview

COVID-19 is caused by a virus. It can cause a fever, a cough, shortness of breath, and other symptoms. COVID-19 mainly spreads person-to-person through droplets from coughing and sneezing. The virus also can spread when people are in close contact with someone who is infected.

Most people have mild symptoms and can take care of themselves at home.

Caring for a baby while you are sick with COVID-19 can be a challenge. You'll want to take care of yourself and keep your baby safe from the virus.

Experts believe that passing the virus to a baby during pregnancy is unlikely. But after birth, a baby can get the virus through person-to-person contact—just like anyone else. That's why if the mother is sick, a newborn may be kept separate from the parents who have COVID-19 while they are in the hospital.

So far, the virus hasn't been found in breast milk. But it's not known if the virus can be spread through breastfeeding. Talk with your doctor or midwife about breastfeeding while you are sick. You may decide to feed your baby at your breast. Or you may decide to

pump your breast milk and have someone who is healthy give it to your baby. Either way, it's important to work with your care team. There are things you can do to keep your baby safer.

**Follow-up care is a key part of your treatment and safety.** Be sure to make and go to all appointments, and call your doctor or nurse call line if you are having problems. It's also a good idea to know your test results and keep a list of the medicines you take.

### How can you care for yourself and your baby at home?

- Stay home. Don't go to school, work, or public areas. And don't use public transportation, ride-shares, or taxis unless you have no choice. Leave your home only if you need to get medical care. But call the doctor's office first so they know you're coming.
- Wear a mask or cloth face cover when you are around other people, including your baby. It can help stop the spread of the virus. Children under 2 years of age should not wear a face cover.
- Limit contact with people in your home, including your baby. If possible, stay in a separate bedroom and use a separate bathroom.
- Avoid contact with pets and other animals. If you can, have a friend or family member care for them while you're sick.
- If you are able, move around as much as possible. Getting out of bed can help prevent blood clots in your legs.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Then throw the tissue in the trash right away.
- Wash your hands often, especially after you cough or sneeze. Use soap and water,

and scrub for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water aren't available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

- Don't share personal household items. These include bedding, towels, cups and glasses, and eating utensils.
- Clean and disinfect your home every day. Use household cleaners or disinfectant wipes or sprays. Take special care to clean things that you grab with your hands. These include doorknobs, remote controls, phones, and handles on your refrigerator and microwave. And don't forget countertops, tabletops, bathrooms, and computer keyboards.
- Take acetaminophen (Tylenol) to relieve your fever and body aches. Read and follow all instructions on the label.

### **If you're breastfeeding**

- Take extra care to avoid passing the infection to your baby.
  - Wash your hands well before you touch your baby.
  - Wear a mask or cloth face cover. Wear it anytime you hold your baby.
- Take care if you pump breast milk.
  - Wash your hands well before you touch the pump or bottle.
  - Clean the pump well when you're done. Read the instructions that came with the pump, or ask for help from your doctor or midwife.
  - If you can, have someone who isn't sick give your baby the bottle.

### **When should you call for help?**

#### **If you are ill**

**Call** anytime you think you may need emergency care. For example, call if you have life-threatening symptoms, such as:

- You have severe trouble breathing. (You can't talk at all.)
- You have constant chest pain or pressure.
- You are severely dizzy or light-headed.
- You are confused or can't think clearly.
- Your face and lips have a blue colour.
- You passed out (lost consciousness) or are very hard to wake up.

**Call your doctor or nurse call line now** or seek immediate medical care if:

- You have moderate trouble breathing. (You can't speak a full sentence.)
- You are coughing up blood (more than about 1 teaspoon [5 mL]).
- You have signs of low blood pressure. These include feeling light-headed; being too weak to stand; and having cold, pale, clammy skin.

Watch closely for changes in your health, and be sure to contact your doctor or nurse call line if:

- Your symptoms get worse.
- You are not getting better as expected.

#### **Call before you go to the doctor's office.**

Follow their instructions. And wear a cloth face cover.

**If you are worried that your baby is ill**, call your doctor or nurse call line now or seek immediate medical care.