

C^oVID-19 Self-Care Guide

What you need to know

What you need to do

To protect your own health
and the health of others

Last updated: 15 May 2020

As the COVID-19 situation is constantly evolving, please refer to authoritative sources such as <https://www.moh.gov.sg/covid-19/faqs> for up-to-date information.

The purpose of this self-care guide

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Your home is your sanctuary

The purpose of this guide is to help you in taking the best decisions for your own health and the health of your close friends and family during the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

This guide will enable you to:

- Learn the best ways to protect yourself
- Take care of yourself
- Learn the basic care to provide to your friends and family
- Learn when and who to consult when you require care and services

How can I stay informed?

Coronavirus updates are available at <https://www.moh.gov.sg/covid-19>

Pay attention to the notices and follow the instructions from government as relayed by the media (television, newspapers, radio, Internet).

The COVID-19 Pandemic

Definition

COVID-19 is a disease caused by a Coronavirus, a highly contagious virus that affects the respiratory tract. It is transmitted from one person to another.

A pandemic occurs when a new virus spreads throughout the world. Since humans are not protected against the new virus, a greater number of people become sick.



Transmission of the virus

The Coronavirus is very easily transmitted by tiny droplets that are expelled into the air when an infected person coughs or sneezes.

If the person covers their nose and mouth when sneezing or coughing, the droplets will land in their elbow, upper arm, mask, facial tissue or handkerchief.

We can become infected by the Coronavirus (COVID-19) when:

- Droplets from an infected person who coughs or sneezes come into contact with our eyes, nose or mouth
- We touch a contaminated object or surface with our hands and then touch our face

Symptoms develop on average from 5 to 7 days after contamination, but may appear between 2 and 12 days. To be prudent, 14 days of isolation is recommended.

COVID-19 spreads during close contact between people. Close contact can occur when:

- Someone lives in the same home as an infected person
- Someone provides care to an infected person
- People gather in public places and meetings

Persons at risk

Based on current published data, 80% of infected individuals recover without any special treatment*

Some categories of people are at a higher risk to suffer from severe respiratory complications of a Coronavirus infection, such as pneumonia or acute respiratory syndrome.

The following categories of people are at higher risk of developing severe disease:

- ◆ Older people
- ◆ People with the following underlying conditions
 - High blood pressure
 - Heart disease
 - Lung disease
 - Cancer
 - Diabetes



Symptoms

COVID-19 can resemble the common cold or be much more like severe respiratory diseases.

FREQUENT SYMPTOMS	SEVERE SYMPTOMS (1 CASE OUT OF 6*)
Cough	Difficulty breathing (dyspnea)
Fever	
Tiredness	

* Based on information that was available when this publication was produced.

What should I do when I have COVID-19 symptoms?

- Stay at home and avoid contact with others
- Wash your hands frequently
- Follow good respiratory hygiene practices
- Cover your mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing (elbow, upper arm or disposable paper tissue)
- If you are experiencing any of the symptoms, you may logon to <https://sgcovidcheck.com/> to decide on what your next steps should be, based on the symptoms you are experiencing
- You may go to any Public Health Preparedness Clinics and polyclinics. Check <https://www.phpc.gov.sg> for more information



Prevention, protection and health advice

How to prevent and protect against a Coronavirus (COVID-19) infection

There is currently no known treatment or vaccine for Coronavirus (COVID-19). Prevention is the only way to protect yourself and protect others.

Practice Social Distancing

As much as possible, remain at a safe distance (2 metres away) from others. Do not hug, shake hands or kiss. If a close friend or family member shows COVID-19 symptoms, avoid contact with their personal objects such as glassware, dishes, etc. Ask the person to use hygienic practices when coughing or sneezing and immediately wash their hands.



Wash your hands OFTEN

Frequent hand washing is the best way to protect yourself and others from Coronavirus (COVID-19). Teach your children and close friends and family the right way to wash their hands (see page 16).

WHEN should I wash my hands?

As often as possible, but especially:

- Before I touch my face (eyes, mouth, nose)
- After I cough, sneeze or blow my nose
- Before and after I provide care
- to a close friend or family member
- When my hands are visibly dirty or after I touch a dirty object
- Before and after I prepare meals
- Before and after I eat
- After using the toilet
- Before and after going to a public place

WHAT DO I USE to wash my hands?

It is recommended to wash hands with lukewarm water and soap. You can also clean your hands with a 60%-70% alcohol-based gel, foam or liquid sanitizer.

Wear a protective mask

Wearing a protective mask is recommended especially if you are showing symptoms (see page 17). The mask will help to reduce the spread of COVID-19.

Self-isolate when returning from a trip

Follow your government's instructions and self-isolate at home after returning from a trip abroad.

Precautions and care

If you have Coronavirus symptoms (see page 5), feel weak and fatigued, rest will help you fight the disease. Limit your contact with others until you have no more symptoms. You can go back to your normal activities when your state of health allows you to.

Stay at home if you have one or more symptoms.



Drink frequently

Frequent drinking is important because fever causes perspiration and major loss of liquids. You should drink at least 1.5 litres of liquids every day. You can drink cold or warm liquids, as you prefer. Avoid alcoholic beverages and liquids like coffee or tea that contain caffeine, as well as soft drinks.

Alcohol and caffeine will cause you to urinate more often and increase loss of liquids.

Watch out for these signs of dehydration:

- Extreme thirst
- Dry mouth and tongue
- Infrequent and/or dark urine
- Dizziness, confusion and headaches

Protect your family

Do the following to protect your family until you have no more symptoms (fever, cough, fatigue):

- Self-isolate in a bedroom to avoid contaminating others
- Sleep and eat meals alone in your bedroom
- Only use one bathroom
- Cover your nose and mouth when sneezing or coughing, ideally with a facial tissue (see page 17). Wash your hands right after
- If you do not have any facial tissue, cough or sneeze into your elbow or upper arm, which are not in contact with people or objects (see page 17)
- Spit into a facial tissue
- Throw away facial tissues into a garbage bag in a trash can with a lid. Keep used tissues away from children
- Do not allow visitors in the house

Keep your environment clean

The Coronavirus (COVID-19) can survive for the following lengths of time on objects and surfaces:

- 3 hours on dry surfaces
- 6 days on moist surfaces

Therefore, it is important that you clean counters, sinks, door handles and all other surfaces frequently touched by hands. Cleaning and disinfecting are very efficient ways of eliminating the virus.

Use soap and water or household cleaners to clean surfaces.

Use a 1/9 bleach-water solution or disinfectants. For example, this means 10 ml of bleach to 90 ml of water.

If you are sick, your sheets, towels, cloths and dishware can be washed with those of others in the home using normal detergents.



Seek help

If you are feeling unwell with a fever, or respiratory symptoms (such as cough, runny nose), please seek medical attention promptly. You can go to any of the Public Health Preparedness Clinics (PHPCs), as well as polyclinics. You may look for a PHPC near you at <https://www.phpc.gov.sg>. All cases fulfilling the suspect case definition seen at various healthcare settings will be reported to MOH immediately and referred to hospitals for further assessment and treatment.

Stay informed

Listen to the radio, watch TV, read the newspaper and / or go to the following government website often for updates on COVID-19 : <https://www.moh.gov.sg/covid-19>.

Always follow the government's current notices and instructions, since the situation can change.

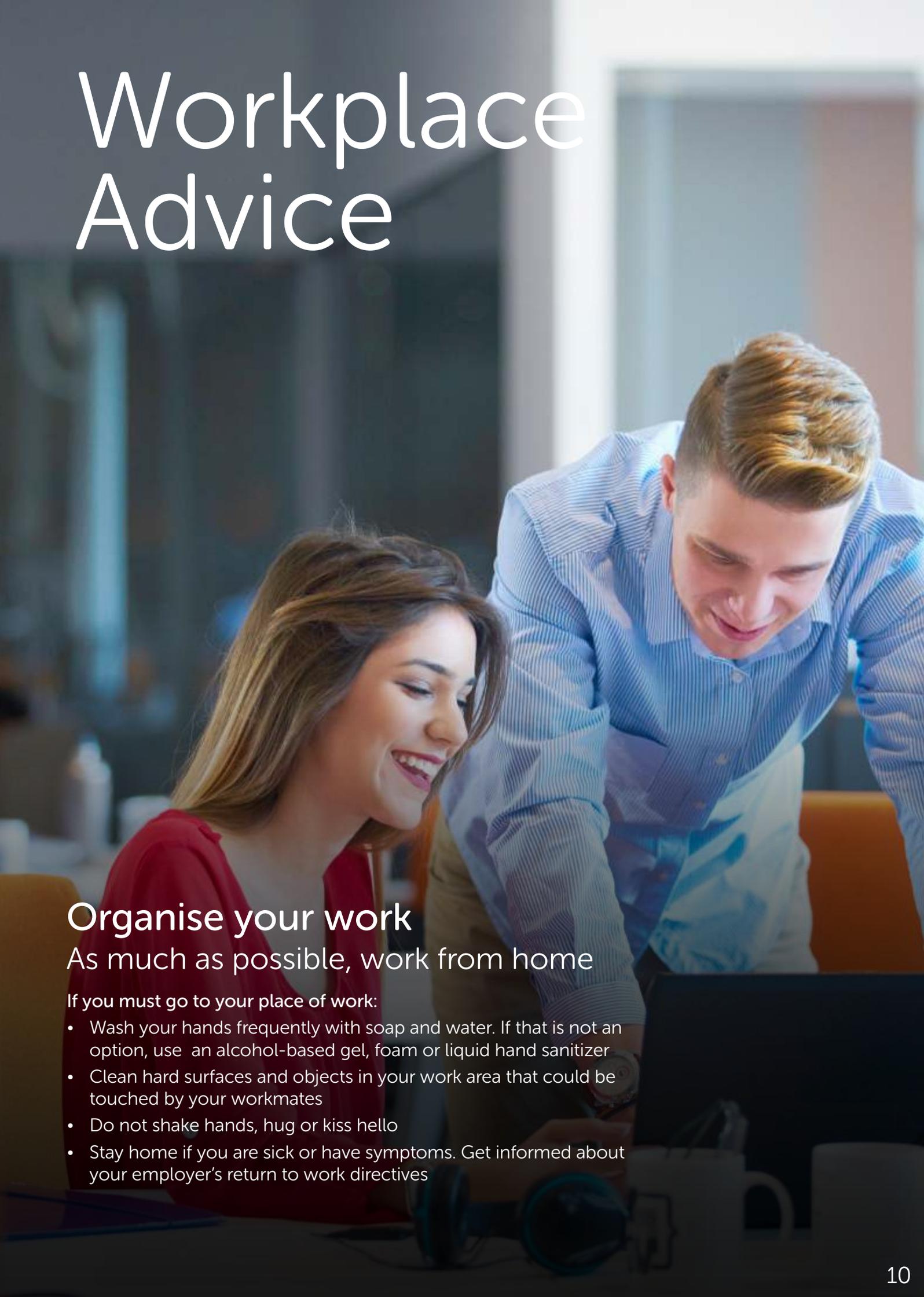
Basic information for your kids

Show them:

- The right way to wash their hands with soap and water (see page 16)
- How to sneeze and wipe their nose with disposable facial tissue (see page 17)
- How to sneeze and cough into their elbow and onto their upper arm (see page 17)
- Remind them often to keep at a distance from sick people.
- Keep the Decision Fact Sheet close at hand (see page 20). It contains advice on what to do in different symptom situations.



Workplace Advice



Organise your work

As much as possible, work from home

If you must go to your place of work:

- Wash your hands frequently with soap and water. If that is not an option, use an alcohol-based gel, foam or liquid hand sanitizer
- Clean hard surfaces and objects in your work area that could be touched by your workmates
- Do not shake hands, hug or kiss hello
- Stay home if you are sick or have symptoms. Get informed about your employer's return to work directives

Medication for relieving symptoms

Use medication intelligently

If you have no complications, Coronavirus (COVID-19) treatment does not require special medication.

Over-the-counter medication

Over-the-counter medication can be used to relieve Coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms. But read the label carefully and only take the recommended dose. It is strongly suggested to ask your pharmacist for instructions before taking over-the-counter medication when you have symptoms.

Relieving symptoms

Fever

Fever is one of the body's defence mechanisms that help fight infection. Acetaminophen is recommended to reduce fever and make you more comfortable unless your health professional advises against it or you are allergic.

Fever is defined as follows:

- Children: 38°C (100.4°F) and more (rectal)
- Adults: 38°C (100.4°F) and more (oral)
- Seniors: 37.8°C (98.6°F) and more (oral)
OR
- 1.1°C higher than normal

Sore throat

Gargle with a glass of salt water: 2.5 ml (1/2 tsp.) of salt in 250 ml (1 cup) of lukewarm water (do not swallow). Hard candy and / or lozenges, preferably sugar-free, may also relieve a sore throat. If you are sent to be examined by a health professional, be sure to take a complete current list of all your medications.

If medications are prescribed:

- Be sure to follow recommended doses and other instructions
- Reach out to your pharmacist or doctor if a problem arises when taking your medication
- Always keep your medication in a dry location and out of the reach of children



Caring for sick children

Prevention, precaution and care for children are the same as for adults



See a doctor

See a doctor in the following situations:

- Your child is under the age of three months and has a rectal temperature in excess of 38°C (100.4°F)
- Your child has a chronic disease or is immune-deficient and has a rectal temperature in excess of 38°C (100.4°F)
- Your child seems very sick, is listless and you have trouble waking him up

Make your child comfortable

Ensure that the child:

- Is wearing light clothing
- Rests a lot
- Drinks enough and shows no signs of dehydration, especially in case of vomiting and / or diarrhea

Watch for the following signs of dehydration:

- No urination over a six-hour period of time for babies (eight hours for older children)
- Recessed fontanelles (soft spots on the top of babies' heads)
- Cold skin that does not regain normal shape quickly when pinched
- Irritability, somnolence

If your child shows signs of dehydration, please seek medical advice immediately.

Maintain room temperature at around 20°C (68°F).



Alerts

- Always take your child's temperature with a thermometer, preferably rectally
- Wait 30 minutes before taking the child's temperature orally if he or she has eaten something cold or hot
- Do not rub your child with alcohol to lower fever as it may be absorbed by the skin or enter the lungs and can be toxic
- Do not give ibuprofen (Brufen) to children under the age of six months
- Do not give acetylsalicylic acid (Aspirin®) to children under the age of 3

Elder care



Seniors are more susceptible to infection and complications due to the normal aging process. They are at a higher risk category.

A Coronavirus (COVID-19) infection can manifest itself in different ways in the elderly.

While seniors may have no fever, they may show the following signs of an infection:

- Fast onset loss of autonomy (lower interest in participating in care, preparing meals, etc.)
- Loss of appetite
- Confusion
- Sleepiness
- Falling
- Onset of incontinence
- Increased agitation or sluggishness
- Sleep disturbances
- Irritability

Prevention, protection and care

The prevention, protection and care instructions shown in this guide also apply to seniors.

Seniors are at greater risk of the following:

Dehydration

Seniors are at greater risk of dehydration especially because the thirst sensation becomes less acute as we age. Seniors do not always think of drinking because they do not feel thirsty

- Remind seniors to drink frequently
- Encourage them to take more liquids with meals and medications
- Discourage seniors from drinking alcohol and beverages with caffeine (see page 8)

Malnutrition

Seniors need to increase their protein consumption when they have an infection

Proteins are found in meat, fish, legumes, eggs, milk products and nuts

Seniors need to have protein-rich snacks in between meals and at bedtime

Loss of autonomy

Remaining immobile while lying in bed or sitting in a chair for just 24 hours can have a major impact on loss of autonomy and the onset of complications.

As soon as possible, get the person up and moving, dress on his or her own, and perform personal hygiene and other daily activities in accordance with capacity. This will considerably reduce the risk of complications.



Hygiene and Prevention

Hand Washing

Wash hands often, especially:

- When they are visibly dirty
- After sneezing or coughing
- After you blow your nose
- After using the toilet
- After changing a diaper
- Before preparing, touching or serving food
- Before eating
- Before putting in or taking out your contact lenses
- After moving garbage

Wash your hands with soap and water. Antibacterial soap is not required.

If soap and water are not available you can use an alcohol-based gel, foam or liquid sanitizer (at least 60% alcohol).

Take a little gel, foam or liquid sanitizer with your fingertips and rub both sides of your hands, fingers and in between your fingers. Continue to rub until your hands are dry without having used paper towels.

Alerts

Sanitizers must be stored out of reach of young children. They can only be used occasionally and with supervision.



Respiratory Hygiene

Cough and sneeze without contaminating others.



COVER

your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing.



THROW

the tissue in the garbage.



IF NO TISSUE IS AVAILABLE,

cough or sneeze into your elbow or on your upper arm.



WASH

your hands often. If soap and water are unavailable, use a hand sanitizer.

Wearing a Mask

If you have a fever or are coughing or sneezing, wear a mask in the following situations:

- Other people are in close proximity
- You are in the hospital emergency room or a medical clinic waiting room
- You are in a public place
- You are near a sick person who is not wearing a mask, such as a young child

If you have no symptoms but need to be in contact to administer care to someone who has a fever or is coughing or sneezing, you should wear a mask. Place your used mask in a garbage bag in a closed trash can and out of reach of children. Wash your hands after removing your mask. Use masks that are sold over the counter in pharmacies or other stores. You may also wear a cotton scarf, but wash it every day.



PLACE

the mask rigid edge up



MOLD

the rigid edge to your nose



POSITION

the bottom edge of the mask under your chin

Change your mask when it becomes damp.
Never touch your eyes, nose and mouth with your hands.

Decision Fact Sheet



If you have COVID-19 symptoms

Follow the instructions below to help you take the optimal decision for you and your close friends and family. Always use proper hygienic and preventive measures to avoid contamination.

- Wash your hands frequently
- Keep your environment clean
- Cough or sneeze into the crook of your elbow, onto your upper arm or into a paper facial tissue, not your hands

Adults & children

No fever (less than 38°C/100.4°F) but the following symptoms:

- Sore throat
- Blocked nose
- Runny nose
- Cough

Decision

You may logon to Singapore COVID-19 Symptom Checker at <https://sgcovidcheck.com/> to decide on what your next steps should be, based on the symptoms you are experiencing.

You may also go to any of the Public Health Preparedness Clinics (PHPCs), as well as polyclinics. More information can be found on <https://www.phpc.gov.sg>.

Adults at risk of severe respiratory symptoms

- I have a fever higher than 38°C/100.4°F.
- I am in an at-risk category for severe respiratory complications (senior or person with chronic cardiac and/or pulmonary problems, immune deficiency or diabetes).

Adults

I have a fever and/or some of the following symptoms:

Cough | Extreme fatigue | Difficulty breathing

I am an elderly person with geriatric symptoms (loss of autonomy, falling, confusion onset, agitation or sluggishness, loss of appetite, extreme fatigue, etc.).

Decision

Please seek medical attention immediately. You can go to any of the Public Health Preparedness Clinics (PHPCs), as well as polyclinics. You may look for a PHPC near you at <https://www.phpc.gov.sg>.

Adults or children

I have a fever higher than 38°C/100.4°F and one or more of the following:

- Persistent and / or increasing difficulty in breathing
- Blue lips
- Difficulty moving
- Fever (baby less than three months of age)
- Somnolence, confusion, disorientation, difficulty staying awake
- No urine for 12 hours

Decision

Please call SCDF (995) ambulance and inform ambulance operator of your symptoms.

General information

MOH COVID-19 updates:
<https://www.moh.gov.sg/covid-19>

MOH Hotline: +65 6325 9220

Operating Hours:

Monday to Friday: 8.30am to 6.00pm

Weekends and Public Holidays: Closed

Important phone numbers:

Your Pharmacist: _____

Your Doctor: _____

PREVENTING INFECTIONS

It's a collective responsibility



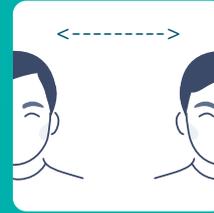
Cough into
your sleeve



Throw away
used tissues



Clean
your hands



Keep your
distance



Stay
Home

For more information on COVID-19, please get in touch:
24 Hour Hotline

+65 68123785

Gleneagles Hospital Singapore

6A Napier Road, Singapore 258500

Tel: +65 6575 7575

www.gleneagles.com.sg

Mount Elizabeth Hospital Orchard

3 Mount Elizabeth, Singapore 228510

Tel: +65 6250 0000

www.mountelizabeth.com.sg

Mount Elizabeth Hospital Novena

38 Irrawaddy Road, Singapore 329563

Tel: +65 6898 6898

www.mountelizabeth.com.sg

Parkway East Hospital

321 Joo Chiat Place, Singapore 427990

Tel: +65 6377 3737

www.parkwayeast.com.sg

Parkway Shenton

Tel: +65 6227 7777

www.parkwayshenton.com

Reference:

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- World Health Organisation. Retrieved from <https://www.who.int/>.