

Information for people with respiratory infections

HEALTH ADVICE AND PREVENTION MEASURES

Based on your symptoms, the Direction de la santé publique de l'Agence de la santé et des services sociaux de Montréal recommends that you take the prevention measures listed below. These measures are designed to protect the health of your family and friends, as well as of people that come close to you while you are sick.

Protect people around you

- √ Stay at home insofar as possible and limit contact with other people up to 7 days after the symptoms begin.
- √ Other people in your home can go out and continue their usual activities. They don't have to stay in isolation at home.

Wash your hands often

- √ Wash your hands often (see Appendix 1). **Handwashing is the best way to prevent infections.** People who live with you or are caring for you should also wash their hands often.
- √ Don't share personal items such as towels, dishes or utensils.
- √ Follow good respiratory hygiene practices (see Appendix 1).
- √ Put used tissues in a garbage bag in a closed waste receptacle.

Clean your environment

- √ Influenza virus can live up to two days on hard surfaces; therefore it is important to wash surfaces such as counters and sinks with a household disinfectant. The toilet bowl and surfaces often touched with hands should be cleaned more often. Cleaning is very effective at eliminating the virus and other germs.
- √ Your bedding, towels, clothes and dishes can be washed with those of other family members using your regular detergent or soap. It is best to wash them in hot water.

Monitor your symptoms

- √ Recurrence of fever
- √ Feeling out of breath, difficulty breathing or thoracic pain
- √ See a doctor if you get these symptoms

See a doctor

- √ If you have the symptoms described above.

If you have to see a doctor or other health professional

- √ Contact Info-santé before leaving home so you can be guided to a clinic or hospital.
- √ Wash your hands before leaving home and wear a mask as soon as you get to the health care facility.
- √ Take a taxi or car to get there rather than public transport.
- √ Avoid shaking hands with other people.
- √ Tell the receptionist about your symptoms when you get there. You will be asked to wait in a separate room or in a place where you will be more than two metres away from other patients.

Tell people around you

If a family member presents similar symptoms, you should tell them to see a health professional, as per the instructions given above.

If you need more information, call the Info-Santé line at 811.

APPENDIX 1

HANDWASHING AND RESPIRATORY HYGIENE

When should you wash your hands?

- When they are dirty
- After sneezing or coughing
- After blowing your nose
- After using the toilet
- After changing a baby's diaper
- Before preparing, handling or serving food
- Before eating
- Before putting on or removing your contact lenses
- After handling garbage

Keep your hands away from your eyes, nose and mouth.

What should you use to wash your hands?

- Use ordinary soap and water; antibacterial soap is **not** necessary.
- If a sink and running water are not available, you can use an alcohol-based hand rub (waterless cleaner). Choose a product containing at least 60% alcohol.

How to wash your hands effectively with soap

- Wet your hands.
- Apply soap.
- Rub your hands together vigorously for 15 to 20 seconds; remember to rub everywhere.
- Wash all hand surfaces, including between the fingers and fingertips.
- Rinse hands under running water.
- Dry hands with a clean hand towel or paper towel.
- Use the hand towel or paper towel to turn off the faucets.
- Don't share your towel with other family members.
- Your hand towel should be changed every day.

How to wash your hands well with an alcohol-based hand rub (waterless cleaner)

- Use a teaspoon (5 ml) of hand rub.
- Rub your hands together vigorously for 15 to 20 seconds; remember to rub everywhere.
- Go over all hand surfaces, including between the fingers and fingertips.
- Let hands dry in the air.

Respiratory hygiene

- Cover your nose and mouth, ideally with a tissue, when coughing or sneezing. Wash your hands immediately after.
- If you don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into the crook of your arm or against your inner arm, as these are parts of the body that don't come into contact with other people or objects.
- Spit into paper tissues.

Dispose of used tissues in a garbage bag; put the bag in a closed waste receptacle or keep it out of reach of children.

Once full, tie the bag tightly and throw it out with the regular garbage.