COVID@Home General Care Advice and Self-Monitoring Instructions

General Care Advice

- Remain self-isolated. Here are some links that you can use to keep yourself, your family members and your community safe (see document about how to self-isolate).

- Rest is very important, as it allows the body's immune system to fight the virus most effectively. It also minimizes excessive strain on important parts of the body such as the lungs.

- Hydration is also very important. Please ensure you are drinking adequate amounts of fluid, particularly if you are feeling weak, dizzy or have a dry mouth.

Self-Monitoring Instructions

- COVID-19 symptoms can range from mild to moderate. The following are symptoms that individuals may experience:

  - **Most common symptoms:**
    - Cough (usually dry)
    - Fever (or chills)
    - Fatigue

  - **Other symptoms:**
    - Breathlessness (difficulty with breathing)
    - Muscle Aches
    - Sore throat
    - Headache
    - Loss of Sense of Smell or taste
    - Nausea/vomiting/diarrhea

- These symptoms can evolve and change over the course of the illness (see COVID@Home Symptom Timeline).

- To track your symptoms, we recommend formally assessing and recording them twice daily in the daily symptom tracking sheet, as well as your oxygen saturation (see Pulse Oximetry Patient Instructions).

- You may find a change in position when lying aids your breathing (see document on Timed Position Changes).

Who to Call if Symptoms Change

Call 911 if:	Call your health provider if:
- You have severe trouble breathing or severe chest pain - You are confused or not thinking clearly - You pass out (lose consciousness)	- You have new or worsening trouble breathing - Your symptoms are getting worse - You start getting better and then get worse - You have severe dehydration such as: - Having a very dry mouth - Passing only a little urine - Feeling very light-headed

COVID@Home Symptom Tracker

Please complete a symptom assessment and document at least twice per day (or as directed by your care provider)

Date	Symptom Presence (or relative change) OR Absence						Oxygen Saturation (%)	Heart Rate
	Difficulty Breathing	**Cough**	**Fever**	**Nausea, Vomiting or Diarrhea**	**Other Symptoms (please write in)**	**Fluid Intake Adequate**		
	o Yes o No o Better o Worse o Stable	o Yes o No	o Yes o No o Better o Worse o Stable	o Yes o No o Better o Worse o Stable	o Yes o No	o Yes o No o Better o Worse o Stable		
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COVID@Home Patient Symptom Timeline

Why Days 5 to 10 Are So Important When You Have COVID-19

Tracking your daily symptoms can help you and your doctors make better decisions about whether a hospital visit is needed.

- To monitor COVID-19, it is important to mark your calendar at the first sign of illness, and regularly track your fever and oxygen levels.

- **Day 5-10** of COVID-19 are often the most worrisome time for respiratory complications, particularly for older patients and those with underlying conditions like high blood pressure, obesity or diabetes.

- The best way to monitor your health during this time is to use a **pulse oximeter**. It is a small device that clips on your finger and measures your blood oxygen levels.

- *Normal oxygen saturation range is about 96 to 99 per cent. Call your doctor if your blood oxygen reading drops to 93 per cent or less.*

- While at home, you can increase the flow of oxygen to your lungs by not resting on your back, as outlined in the position changing resource document attached (also on the gbfht.ca website).

- Resting on your stomach can open parts of the lungs that are compressed when lying on your back. You can also change to resting on your left side or right side, or sit upright in a chair.

Timeline of COVID-19 Symptoms:

Note: symptoms can appear at any time – always consult with your health provider for guidance about your specific case if needed

Days 1-3

- Early symptoms of COVID-19 vary widely. It can start with a tickle in your throat, a cough, fever, headache and feeling winded or just a little pressure in your chest

- Sometimes it begins with a bout of diarrhea

- Some people just feel tired and lose their sense of taste and smell

- Many people have several symptoms but no fever

- Some patients with gastrointestinal symptoms go on to develop respiratory symptoms, while others do not

Adapted from Georgian Bay Family Health Team/North Simcoe Muskoka LHIN

Days 4-6

- Some patients never develop more than mild symptoms, or none at all
- Others begin to feel terrible, with an ever-present fever, aches, chills, cough and an inability to get comfortable
- Some younger patients with mild disease may develop rashes, including itchy red patches, swelling or blistering on the toes or fingers, similar to frostbite

Days 7-8

- For patients with mild illness, the worst is over after a week
- Patients who have felt terrible may get worse. And some patients might start to feel better briefly then take a turn for the worse
- Patients should monitor their oxygen levels and **check in with a doctor if they start to feel unwell**

Days 8-12

- Monitoring should continue for the second week of illness. Patients may feel better sleeping on their stomachs or sides
- Monitor for worsening symptoms including increasing shortness of breath, worsening cough
- Your home oxygen monitoring monitor can signal if you need additional medical attention

Days 13-14

- Patients who had mild illness should be well recovered
- Patients who had worse symptoms, but maintained normal oxygen levels, should feel mostly recovered after two weeks, although many patients report lingering fatigue and other issues
- Doctors advise a slow return to activity, even if you had mild or moderate illness
- Patients with severe symptoms and those who needed additional treatment because of low oxygen may still feel unwell and fatigued and take far longer to recover

Do not hesitate to seek medical attention if you feel that your condition is worsening!

Adapted from Georgian Bay Family Health Team/North Simcoe Muskoka LHIN

COVID@Home: Timed Position Changes

Timed Position Changes: You can use the monitor to check your oxygen saturations 15 minutes after each position change to ensure oxygen saturation has not decreased.

- Please try to not spend a lot of time lying flat on your back. Lying on your stomach and in different positions will help your body to get air into all areas of your lungs.

- It is recommended to change your position every 30 minutes to 2 hours rotating as below. Please note sitting up is better than lying on your back.

- Continue to monitor oxygen saturations at 8AM and 1PM.

1. **30 minutes to 2 hours lying fully prone on your belly (bed flat)**

2. **30 minutes to 2 hours lying on right side (bed flat)**
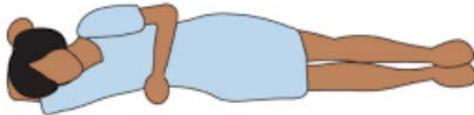
3. **30 minutes to 2 hours sitting up (30-60 degrees) by adjusting head of the bed**

4. **30 minutes to 2 hours lying on left side (bed flat)**
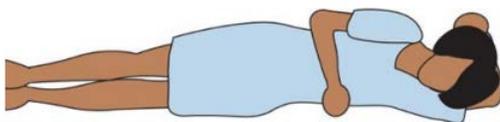
5. **30 minutes to 2 hours lying prone on your belly again**

6. **Continue to repeat the cycle**

Adapted from Georgian Bay Family Health Team/North Simcoe Muskoka LHIN
**Adopted from Sources: ICS Guidance for Prone Positioning of the Conscious COVID Patient 2020.

Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

How to Self-Isolate

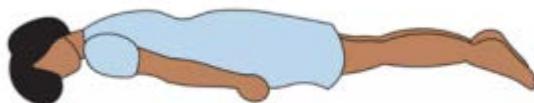> **You must isolate yourself from others if you have COVID-19 symptoms or may have been exposed to COVID-19. If you start to feel worse, contact your health care provider or Telehealth (1-866-797-0000).**

Stay home

- Do not use public transportation, taxis or rideshares.
- Do not go to work, school or other public places.

Avoid contact with others

- No visitors unless essential (e.g., care providers).
- Stay away from seniors and people with chronic medical conditions (e.g., diabetes, lung problems, immune deficiency).
- As much as possible, stay in a separate room from other people in your home and use a separate bathroom if you have one.
- Make sure that shared rooms have good airflow (e.g., open windows).
- If these steps are not possible, keep a distance of at least two metres from others at all times.

Keep your distance

- If you are in a room with other people, keep a distance of at least two metres and wear a mask that covers your nose and mouth.
- If you cannot wear a mask, people should wear a mask when they are in the same room as you.

2 meters

Wash your hands

- Wash your hands often with soap and water.
- Dry your hands with a paper towel or with cloth towel that no one else will share.
- Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available.

15 sec

Cover your coughs and sneezes

- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze.
- Cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve or elbow, not your hand.
- Throw used tissues in a lined wastebasket and wash your hands. Lining the wastebasket with a plastic bag makes waste disposal safer.
- Clean your hands after emptying the wastebasket.

Wear a mask over your nose and mouth

- Wear a mask if you must leave your house to see a health care provider.
- Wear a mask when you are within two metres of other people, or stay in a separate room.
- If you do not have a mask, maintain two meters distance from people and cover your cough and sneezes. See our Physical Distancing fact sheet.

What should I do if I develop symptoms?

- Complete the COVID-19 Self-Assessment.
- Contact Telehealth (1-866-797-0000) or your health care provider.
- Anyone with whom you had close physical contact (e.g., in your household) in the two days before your symptoms started or after symptoms started should also self-isolate. If you have questions about this, call your local public health unit.
- Isolate for 14 days beginning when your symptoms started.
- After 14 days, you can stop isolating if you no longer have a fever and your symptoms have improved, but you should continue with physical distancing measures.
- If you are still unwell at 14 days, contact Telehealth or your health care provider.

Learn about the virus

COVID-19 is a new virus. It spreads by respiratory droplets of an infected person to others with whom they have close contact such as people who live in the same household or provide care.

You can also access up to date information on COVID-19 on the Ontario Ministry of Health's website: ontario.ca/coronavirus.

Ontario

Pulse Oximetry- Patient Instructions for use

Pulse oximeters are medical devices that use red and infrared light to determine how much oxygen is circulating in your blood. The device is designed like a clip that covers the tip of your finger. Pulse oximeters measure your oxygen level and your heart rate. They must be positioned properly and used on fingers with good circulation.

How to use

1. Sit in a comfortable position.
2. Ensure that your hands are clean and relatively warm.
3. Remove any nail polish, artificial nails bandages or anything else covering your nails.
4. If your fingers are cold, warm your fingers by running them under good warm water or with a warm cloth, and by rubbing them – the oximeter needs good circulation to the finger to give an accurate reading.
5. Open the pulse oximeter like a clothes pin. Do not force it, it should open easily and just wide enough to allow your finger to fit inside.
6. Slide your forefinger or middle finger from either hand as far in as it will easily advance.
7. The pulse oximeter will turn on automatically when you insert your finger, the display may flash as it obtains the reading.
8. While waiting for the numbers to stabilize, check the battery indicator on the display. If the battery is low, contact _____ for advice.
9. Try to keep your hand relaxed and still while the pulse oximeter is measuring your oxygen level. There may be a small light or bar that illuminates every time your heart beats.
10. After about 1 minute record your oxygen level. The top number on the display is your oxygen level, the other number is your heart rate.
11. Remove the pulse oximeter from your finger. The device will turn off automatically and is ready to use again.

If the numbers are not displayed consistently:

- Make sure that your finger is all the way inside the oximeter
- Try another finger if still not reading
- Ensure the finger is warm, do not clench your fist, and keep your hand still.

Results

The maximum oxygen level is 100% and lower levels indicate that you have less oxygen circulating in your blood. If you have been prescribed home oxygen therapy, note beside the recording whether the measurement was done while using oxygen.

Your care team will advise you what pulse oximetry levels are acceptable for you. Generally, an oxygen level of 93% or greater is acceptable. **If your reading is less than 93% contact your care team.**

If your reading is lower by more than 3% from the previous day try a different finger to check the accuracy. If that reading is the same, contact your care team:

- Ensure that you are sitting and resting in a comfortable position. Loosen any tight clothing. Let someone in your home know that your oxygen level is lower.
- If you have been instructed to use your oxygen, to take any medications or to perform any breathing exercises, do that now.
- If you are very short of breath, feel dizzy, have chest pain or feel very unwell, call 911.

Cleaning

Do not get the oximeter wet. Wipe with a small **alcohol wipe**. Do not use other disinfecting/ antibacterial wipes as they may damage the digital display.

ProResp Inc.
Community Respiratory Therapy