

Keeping Safe at home during the COVID-19 Pandemic of 2020

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Note:

The purpose of this book is to help people living with dementia learn about COVID-19, according to what is known at the time of writing this document. It also includes details about what we are all being advised to do to stop the spread of the virus (according to local, regional, federal and international health experts and politicians). It is not intended to provide advice – and may not include the most up-to-date information, as the details are constantly changing. To keep abreast of current details, please refer to the World Health Organization website, public health websites, local, provincial and federal government websites and other reputable websites that contain updated information.

Important Message

A serious virus is spreading in our community and around the world. It is called COVID-19. The symptoms include, but are not limited to, cough, fever, fatigue and difficulty breathing.

We all must work together to prevent the spread of this virus. Health experts tell us we must stay at home. **We must all listen to this advice.**

- Only go out if it is necessary (for food, medical reasons or work).
- If you go out, stay 2 metres (6 feet) away from other people at all times.
- Wash hands often.
- Cough and sneeze into arm/sleeve.

What is COVID-19?

When we first heard about the COVID-19 virus it was called the Coronavirus. According to the World Health Organization the Coronavirus is a “large family of viruses . . . that are known to cause respiratory infections ranging from the common cold to more severe diseases”. The current virus has been called COVID-19.

The virus has spread to many people, in all parts of the world, and is therefore referred to as a pandemic.

In today's world, many people travel, making it easier for a virus to spread to communities large and small. Since this virus is now spreading, and affecting more and more people, governments around the world have been taking advice from world health leaders and establishing action plans to help stop the virus from spreading and to find a cure.

How does the virus spread?

The World Health Organization says that COVID-19:

“can spread from person to person through small droplets from the nose or mouth which are spread when a person with COVID-19 coughs or exhales.”

“These droplets land on objects and surfaces around the person. Other people then catch COVID-19 by touching these objects or surfaces, then touching their eyes, nose or mouth.”

Updates on COVID-19

Daily updates are provided each day on the news and posted on many reputable websites. Many Prime Ministers and Presidents broadcast messages on television regularly, sometimes each day. Some speak at a specific time each day. Leaders speak to the citizens of their country, province or territory, to let them know what is going on and how the government is helping its people. The most important message is that every citizen must commit to working together to stop the spread of the virus.

What we all need to do.

The most important message from world leaders and health experts is that everyone must stay at home, unless, of course they are an essential worker. Each country, province and/or territory decides who an essential worker is. Everyone else is asked to stay at home. This means that all people – all families – all friends – have been told to stay at home until health experts say it is safe to be with others.

Health experts have asked everyone to stay home, and only leave the house if you need groceries, medicines or have an emergency, and try to limit these outings to once a week. It is okay to take a walk with members of your household, as long as you stay at least 6 feet away from other walkers. If you live in a care home, you need to check the rules for your community, as the public health authorities may have placed restrictions related to leaving the building.

If you have questions about your health, it is best to call your doctor's office, rather than just show up in the office.

It is also okay to provide help to a vulnerable person, as long as you follow the health department's guidelines related to physical distancing and hygiene.

If you need to cough or sneeze, cough or sneeze into your arm. If you use a tissue, put it into the garbage bin. Wash your hands often and use hand sanitizer.

There are many new rules in place across the world that are aimed at reducing the spread of the virus. These rules will continue to be in place until leading health experts and local governments advise us that it is okay to once again gather together.

Many shops, restaurants and businesses have closed. Only essential shops are open in many communities. For example, only grocery stores and pharmacies are open in many areas, because we all need food and many need medications.

Everyone is having to adopt new daily routines. In many communities, schools, parks, and all places where the public normally gather have been closed. No sports or team games are being played. If you have tried to watch your favourite sport on television, you will likely see that there are no current games on the television.

These new rules have been put in place to keep people away from each other. Staying away from people is called social distancing or **physical distancing**. It is important to follow the guidelines provided by the health department in your area, to ensure you are safe from the spread of the COVID-19 germs.

The biggest challenge is that people may not know they have the virus, because it can take up to 14 days before they have the symptoms. So, everyone is being asked to stay at a distance, to make sure we keep everyone as safe as possible.

Families that do not live together are asked not to visit each other. They must use other ways to stay in touch. A phone call or the use of new technology, such as a computer or tablet, such as an iPad, is a great way to stay connected. If you have a computer you could also ask people to email you.

While talking on the phone or seeing friends or family on a computer or iPad isn't the same as being together, it is what everyone – young and old – must do right now.

Health and Social Care Workers are amongst the greatest heroes during these difficult days. They are doing their best to care for everyone who needs care and support. We need to recognize and thank everyone who is working in hospitals, community care and care homes.

In addition to the health and social care workers, the cleaning staff, electricians, plumbers, catering staff and maintenance staff are also all doing their part to help.

As a society we need to say a great big – sincere – thank you to all these brave – and exhausted - people.

We also need to thank those who continue to make sure we have food, medicines, and essential services such as gas, electricity and water in our community.

If a person is admitted to hospital, during the COVID-19 pandemic, they will notice that staff wear protective clothing to ensure the virus does not pass from one person to another. Everyone has to be very careful.

If you live at home and have care providers coming to help you, they will likely wear protective clothing. This special protection is used to keep everyone – including you – as safe as possible.

We all need to do our part to wash away and kill the germs that could be carried on our hands. During this time of heightened precaution, it is important for **EVERYONE** to wash their hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water and to use hand sanitizer often. You could sing “Happy Birthday” twice, to ensure your hands are thoroughly clean!

Infection control experts also say that social gestures such as shaking hands and hugging must stop during this time. Since we are firmly being told to avoid shaking hands, we need to find other ways to let people know that we care. So, smile brightly and wave from afar to let everyone know you are happy to see them.

No one knows how long these new rules will be in place. Let's all work together to keep our distance, wash our hands and do our part to stop the virus from spreading.

Stay at home
Stay Safe
Keep well

COVID-19 RULES

Follow the rules provided by your health department and government.

Wash hands often.

Limit outings – wash hands and use hand sanitizer when you return home.

Keep your distance when you are out – remaining at least 6 feet apart.

If you need to see your doctor – call your doctor's office – don't just show up.

Do not visit family or friends until our health experts tell us it is safe to do so.

