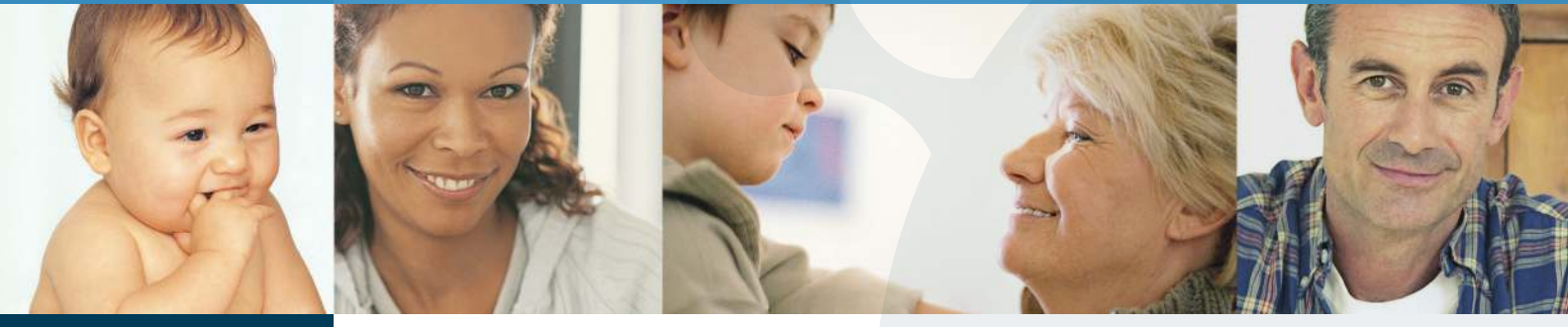
COVID-19

Keep this guide

Self-care Guide



What you need to know
What you need to do

To protect your own health and the health of others

Votre gouvernement

Québec

Table of Contents

2 The purpose of a Self-Care Guide
2 Keep the guide at hand!
2 How can I stay informed?

3 The COVID-19 pandemic
3 Definition
3 Transmission of the virus

4 Persons at risk
5 Symptoms
5 What should I do when I have COVID-19 symptoms?

6 Prevention, protection and health advice
6 How to prevent and protect against a coronavirus (COVID-19) infection
7 Precautions and care

10 Workplace advice
10 Organize your work

11 Medication for relieving symptoms
11 Use medication intelligently
12 Relieving symptoms

13 Caring for sick children
13 See a doctor
13 Give appropriate medication
13 Make your child comfortable

15 Eldercare
15 Prevention, protection and care

16 Hygiene and prevention
16 Hand washing
17 Respiratory hygiene
17 Anti-spray masks

18 My medical Record

21 Decision Fact Sheet

22 Preventing infections

23 Personal Notes

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The masculine used in this publication also refers to the feminine gender, and vice-versa.

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The purpose of a Self-Care Guide

Your home is your primary care centre.

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

Keep the guide at hand!

This guide is also available in French at **Québec.ca/coronavirus**.

How can I stay informed?

Coronavirus updates are available at **Québec.ca/coronavirus**.

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

The coronavirus is very easily transmitted!

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 COVID-19 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:

- Our eyes, nose or mouth is in contact with droplets from an infected person who coughs or sneezes
- We touch a contaminated object or surface with our hands then touch our face

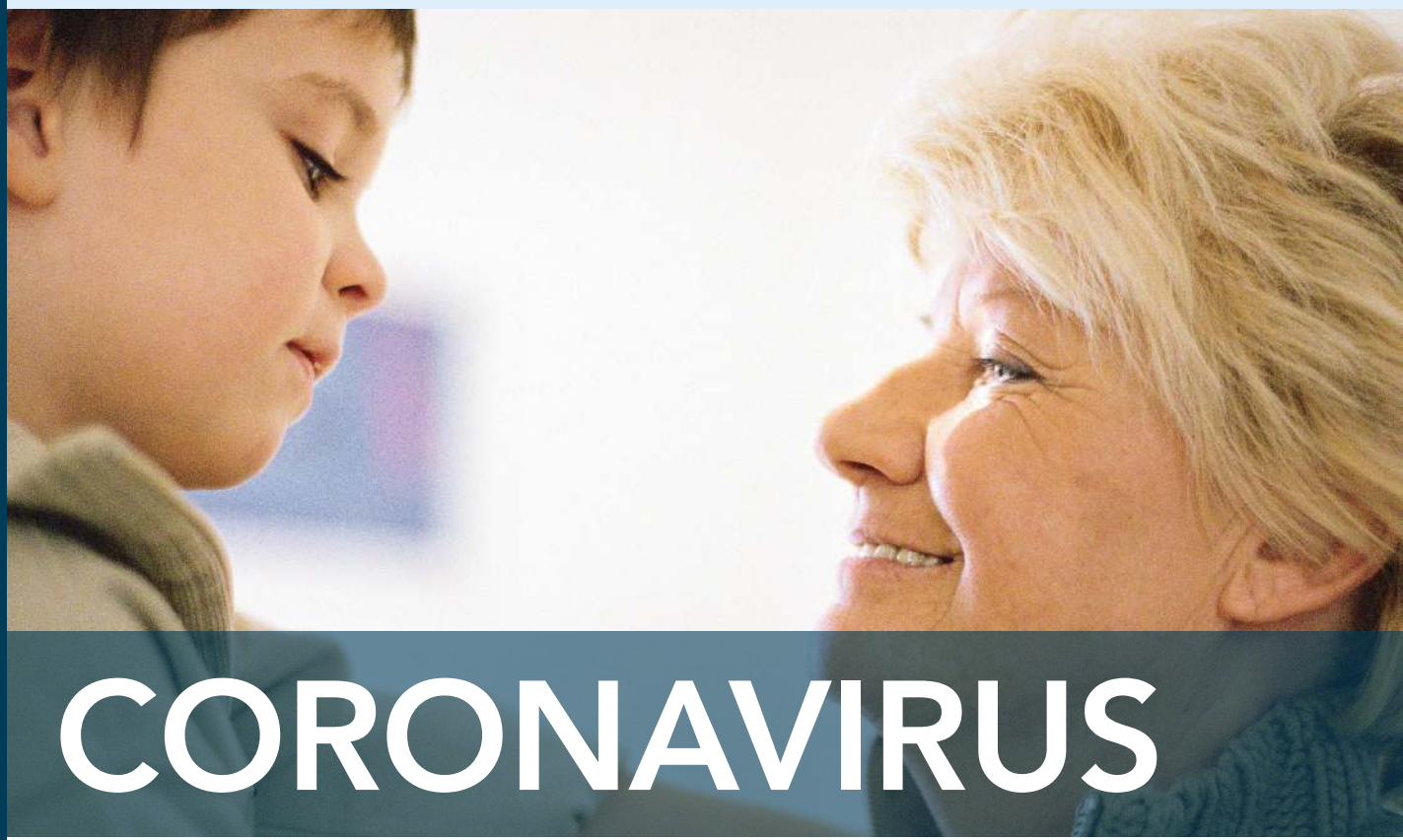
Symptoms develop on average from 5 to 7 days after contamination, but may appear between 2 and 12 days. To be prudent, 14 days of isolation is recommended.

Coronavirus propagates 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

The COVID-19 pandemic



Persons at risk

80% of infected individuals recover without any special treatment.

Some categories of people are at risk of dying from severe respiratory complications of a coronavirus infection, such as pneumonia or acute respiratory syndrome.

The following categories of people infected by the coronavirus (COVID-19) are at risk of dying:

- People aged 70 or more
- People with the following underlying conditions
  - Chronic heart diseases
  - Chronic pulmonary diseases
  - Cancer and immune deficiency
  - Diabetes

Symptoms

A coronavirus disease (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	Pneumonia
Extreme fatigue	

* 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)
- **Call the 1-877-644-4545 coronavirus hotline** to report your symptoms and follow the instructions you are given
- If you have major difficulty breathing, call 911

Prevention, protection and health advice

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.

Avoid contact

Always remain **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. As much as possible, remain at a safe distance from others.

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** or with a 60%-70% alcohol-based gel, foam or liquid sanitizer.

Stay at home if you have one or more symptoms.

Wear a protective mask

Wearing a protective mask is recommended if you are coughing or sneezing around other people (see page 17). The mask will help to prevent contaminating them.

Wearing a mask when you have no symptoms is not recommended.

Self-isolate when returning from a trip

When you are infected and in accordance with government instructions, self-isolate at home **for 14 days** after returning from a trip abroad.

Precautions and care

Rest

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.

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 entourage

Do the following to protect your entourage 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.

Follow the instructions of the ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux provided in the media (television, newspapers, radio, Internet) ***Québec.ca/coronavirus***

Seek help

While many of us have the necessary resources to deal with a COVID-19 situation, others may not. If you are concerned, do not hesitate to ask for or accept help. Talk about it with your close family members.

You can also dial 211 for help or ask your local CLSC to connect you with their home care and services resource.

Stay informed

Listen to the radio, watch TV, read the newspaper and/or go to the following government website often: **Québec.ca/coronavirus**.

The ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux will provide instructions for the population on health matters and to obtain care.

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 21). It contains advice on what to do in different symptom situations.

Workplace advice

Other help tools are available at ***Québec.ca/coronavirus***

AT WORK

Organize 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.

Do not take medications with the same ingredients at the same time, such as Tylenol® and Tylenol sinus®.

If you have other health problems, ask your pharmacist for advice or call Info-Santé 811 before taking over-the-counter medication.

Anti-inflammatories

NSAID anti-inflammatories used to alleviate fever that contain ibuprofen, such as Advil® and Motrin® may aggravate coronavirus disease (COVID-19), but this information comes from clinical observations and has not been confirmed. If you are already taking anti-inflammatories and test positive for coronavirus, speak with your pharmacist, doctor or specialized nurse practitioner.

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 meds
- 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

Give appropriate medication

If your child is older than three months and has rectal fever in excess of 38 °C (100.4 °F), you can administer acetaminophen (Tylenol®, Tempra®, etc.) in accordance with the instructions on the label and your child's weight.

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, administer as needed rehydration solutions such as Pedialyte®, which is sold in pharmacies. Ask your pharmacist for advice.

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 (Advil®, Motrin®, etc.) to children under the age of six months
- Do not give acetylsalicylic acid (Aspirin®, etc.) to children or teenagers under the age of 18

Eldercare

Seniors are more susceptible to infection and complications due to the normal aging process. They also have a higher risk of dying from COVID-19.

A coronavirus (COVID-19) **infection can manifest itself in different ways in seniors**.

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

1 **WET HANDS**

2 **APPLY SOAP**

3 **RUBS FOR**
15-20 seconds

4 **SCRUB**
Nails

5 **RINSE**

6 **DRY**

7 **USE PAPER**
to shut the tap

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.

Alert

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.

1

THROW
the tissue in the garbage.

2

IF NO TISSUE IS AVAILABLE,
cough or sneeze into your elbow or on your upper arm.

3

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

4

Anti-spray masks

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 anti-spray 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.

1

MOLD
the rigid edge to your nose.

2

POSITION
the bottom edge of the mask under your chin.

3

Change your mask when it becomes damp.

Never touch your eyes, nose and mouth with your hands.

TO PRINT

My Medical Record

Keep your record and your family members' records current.*
Bring the record with you to medical appointments.

Personal Information

Name: _____

Date of birth: _____

Address: _____

_____

Home phone #: _____

Cell phone #: _____

Office phone #: _____

Email: _____

Emergency contact

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Health insurance

RAMQ health insurance card #: _____

Expires on: _____

Private insurance: _____

_____

Client #: _____

My doctor

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Clinic address: _____

_____

* As needed, photocopy this form and fill one out for each person.

My pharmacy

Health problems: _____

_____

☐ Diabetes ☐ Hypertension ☐ Cardiac insufficiency

☐ COPD, asthma ☐ Renal insufficiency

Others: _____

_____

_____

_____

Name of my pharmacy: _____

Address of my pharmacy: _____

_____

Phone # of my pharmacy: _____

Allergies to one or more medications: _____

_____

_____

_____

Food allergies

☐ Eggs ☐ Peanuts ☐ Nuts

Others: _____

_____

_____

_____

Immunizations

☐ Influenza (flu) vaccine Date : _____

☐ Pneumococcus vaccine Date : _____

Others: _____

_____

_____

_____

Medication profile

Ask your pharmacist to print out your medication profile or fill out this form.

Name: _____

Date of birth: _____

Date of last update: _____

Name of medication: _____

Dosage (e.g. 100 mg, 5 mg/ml): _____

Frequency (e.g. 1 pill at bedtime): _____

Name of medication: _____

Dosage (e.g. 100 mg, 5 mg/ml): _____

Frequency (e.g. 1 pill at bedtime): _____

Name of medication: _____

Dosage (e.g. 100 mg, 5 mg/ml): _____

Frequency (e.g. 1 pill at bedtime): _____

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Name of medication: _____

Dosage (e.g. 100 mg, 5 mg/ml): _____

Frequency (e.g. 1 pill at bedtime): _____

Name of medication: _____

Dosage (e.g. 100 mg, 5 mg/ml): _____

Frequency (e.g. 1 pill at bedtime): _____

Decision Fact Sheet

Post in a public place

If you have COVID-19 symptoms

Follow the instructions on this poster 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
- Cough or sneeze into the crook of your elbow, onto your upper arm or into a paper facial tissue, not your hands
- Keep your environment clean

Adults & children

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

- Sore throat
- Blocked nose
- Sniffles
- Cough

DECISION

I probably have a cold and need to rest.

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

Call the 1-877-644-4545 coronavirus hotline.

Between 8 a.m. and 6 p.m.

Follow instructions.

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

Go to the emergency room immediately.

If help is needed, call 911.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Service Québec
Coronavirus hotline

1-877-644-4545 (toll free)

Deaf or hard-of-hearing persons

1-800-361-9596 (toll free)

Important phone numbers:

Your parmacist:

Your doctor:

Your CLSC:

Keep informed.
The **Québec.ca/coronavirus** website has up-to-date news.

Santé et Services sociaux Québec

PREVENTING INFECTIONS:
It's a collective responsibility

Québec.ca/**coronavirus**

Toll free: 1-877-644-4545

Votre gouvernement

Québec

Personal Notes

For more informations, go to
Québec.ca/coronavirus

Or call at 1-877-644-4545.

Santé et Services sociaux
Québec

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