



Home Guide to COVID-19

COVID-19 is an illness that can cause cough, fever and shortness of breath. Severe illness is uncommon, though people over 60, and/or those with existing medical conditions are possibly at higher risk for more severe complications¹.

The illness is typically transmitted from person-to-person by droplets expelled by sick people coughing or sneezing. The droplets can be breathed in, or land on surfaces (where it can survive hours to days depending on the ambient temperature and the type of surface) and when others touch the contaminated surfaces and then touch their face and mouth, it can lead to infection. The primary method of reducing transmission COVID-19 is through frequent and thorough hand washing.

The objective of a household preparation plan is to reduce the risk of infection to you and your family during a community outbreak. The household preparation plan can reduce the likelihood of an ill person (or even those without symptoms) from spreading the disease in the home environment and infecting others. It is important to discuss the plan with your neighbors and the members of your household to collaborate to reduce the risk of infection during the outbreak. Ensure you have a list of emergency contact numbers and information about community health and aid organizations². Monitor school closure schedules and notify your child's school if your child becomes ill with COVID-19. Monitor the outbreak situation in your community closely and follow the advice of local authorities.

When "community transmission" is assumed or confirmed in your local area, you can be exposed to the COVID-19 virus anywhere. One should assume that all public surfaces are potentially carrying the virus. "Public" spaces – stores, shops, etc. – carry higher potential risk for transmission than a household environment that is frequently cleaned, disinfected, and whose occupants are following good hand hygiene.

Discuss with your employer the organization's response plan, sick and caregiver leave policies, and if social distancing measures, such as working from home, are possible. Working from home (WFH) can substantially reduce your risk of exposure to COVID-19 as it will reduce your time spent in "public spaces".

¹ U.S. CDC (2020). COVID-19: Get your Home Ready. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/get-your-household-ready-for-COVID-19.html>

² U.S. CDC (2020). COVID-19: Get your Home Ready. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/get-your-household-ready-for-COVID-19.html>



Personal “Zones”

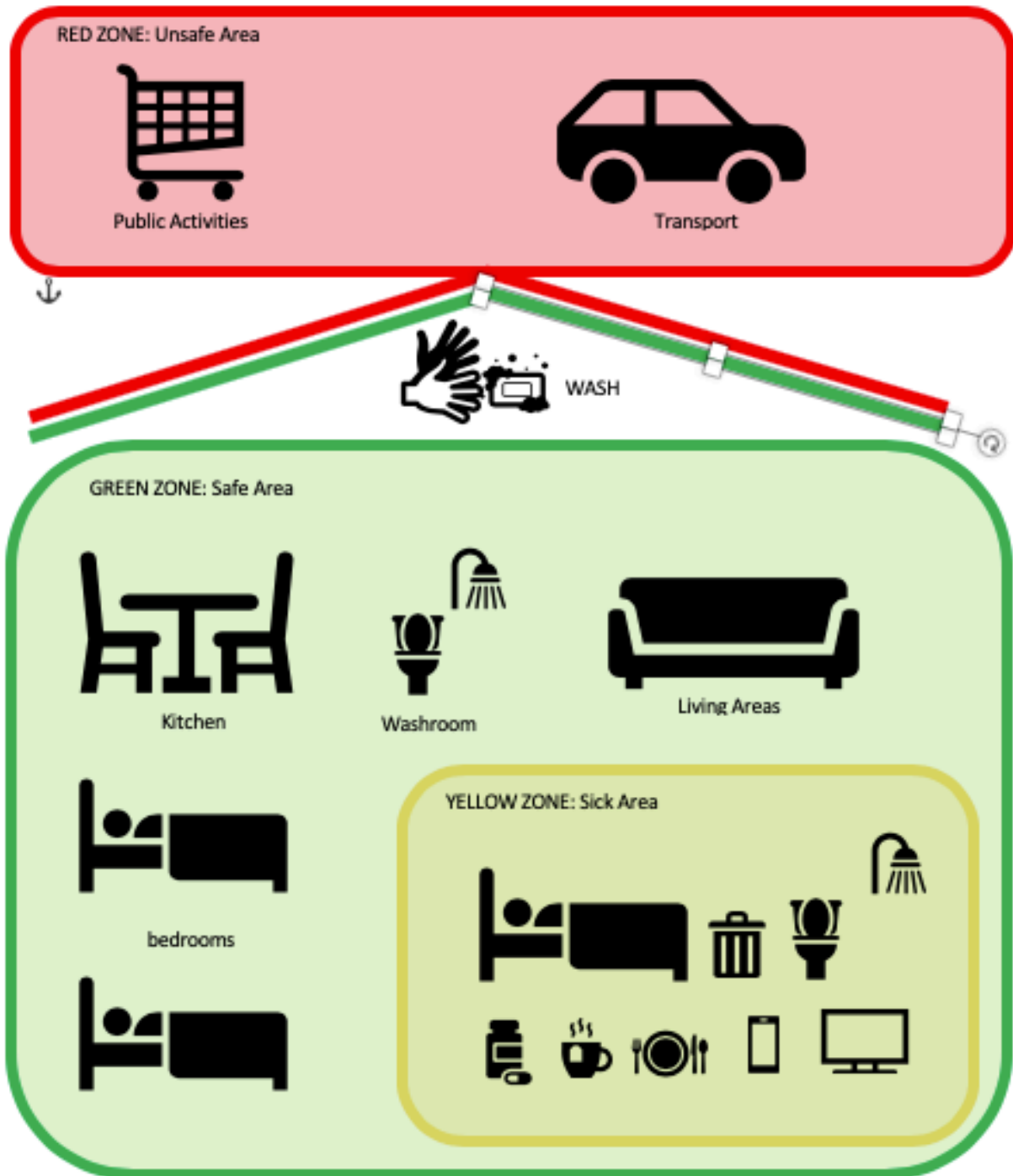
To create a safe personal environment, consider creating the following “zones” in your home:

- **Green Zone:** the area in your home that you maintain and is as “clean” as possible from the COVID-19 virus. Once you enter your home, you are in the “green zone”.
- **Red Zone:** the area that you cannot control; the “public space”. You can consider the red zone as anywhere outside of the home. Once you exit your home, you are in the red zone.
- **Yellow Zone:** the area where a sick home member is stationed. If someone in your household becomes sick, you might consider the sick person’s bed or bedroom – as the “yellow” area. If you are not ill, when you enter the “yellow” area you need to be extra vigilant to reduce the chance of becoming infected (universal precautions of social distancing, and washing hands after exiting the yellow zone).

You should consider that only those who follow a certain practice/procedure are allowed in your **Green zone**. To enter the green zone you must:

- Immediately remove your shoes
- Immediately remove your jacket (gloves, hat, etc.). Store your “outdoor” items in a separate area/storage space where they cannot be touched except to go back outside. Assume they may be contaminated
- Immediately go to the washroom and thoroughly wash your hands (scrub with soap for at least 20 seconds).

PERSONAL ZONING





If you forget to immediately wash your hands – clean all surfaces you touched in the **green zone**.

- If you think you had a close contact with someone who was ill – touched, sneezed or coughed on – consider washing your clothes and taking a shower.
- If you are unwell (at any time) in the **green zone**, immediately wash your hands and isolate yourself in one of your rooms in the house (if feasible).

Considerations to keep your **Green zone** – “green”:

- Wash your hands after opening deliveries, packages, etc. from outside the “green zone” and clean any surfaces or counters touched after opening outside items.
- Any visitor (inclusive of domestic hired cleaners) need to follow the same rules – or they don’t come into your **green zone**.
- Put a (universal precaution) poster ([available on the CDC website](#)) on a highly visible wall inside your home entrance – so you, and all those entering/exiting the house, always remember to follow the precautions.
- Clean frequently touched objects and surfaces often using a regular household detergent and water³.
- Support the emotional health of your household family members, talk about stress, and offer each other support⁴.

Considerations in the **Red Zone**:

- Assume all surfaces are affected and all people are potentially infected
- Keep 6 feet or more between anyone (social distancing)
- Open doors with your hip or shoulder or (disinfectant) wipe
- Make a conscious effort NOT to touch your face/eyes for the duration of the time in the **Red zone** – it’s harder than you think!
- Don’t forget to wash or sanitize your hands after contact with things we often touch in public:
 - Pumping gas – wash your hands and the steering wheel
 - The touch screen at bank machine
 - Credit card swipe machines
 - Parking meters
 - Putting your phone down on a counter – wash the screen – wash it often – it’s closest to your face!
 - Car keys, purses, etc.

³ U.S. CDC (2020). COVID-19: Get your Home Ready. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/get-your-household-ready-for-COVID-19.html>

⁴ U.S. CDC (2020). COVID-19: Get your Home Ready. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/get-your-household-ready-for-COVID-19.html>



If you, or someone at home is sick – considerations for the **Yellow Zone**:

Even when you try your best to do everything right, people still can get sick. So, if this happens, stay calm, and move the sick person into their “**Yellow Zone**”. Considerations:

- Immediately isolate the ill person in their own room, ideally with the door closed
- Ideally, ill person should have their own bathroom which no one else uses (and shower)⁵
- Make sure there are tissues and a disposable garbage bag in the room
- Ample supply of anti-fever medication and a thermometer
- Paper/surgical masks if available
- Activate a HEPA filter air purifier if available
- Communicate regularly using video or phone
- If someone from the **Green zone** needs to enter the sick person’s “**Yellow zone**” – i.e. to bring food, supplies, support - the green zone person should:
 - Wear clothes that can be immediately cleaned after leaving the yellow zone
 - Consider wearing a paper/surgical or N95 mask when in close contact with the sick person; if not available, a face shield or goggles can be used
 - Minimize the time in the **Yellow zone**
 - Take off your clothes and immediately wash them
 - Wash your hands immediately
 - Wash while taking a shower

Ill person should:

- Relax, don’t stress and get plenty of rest
- Drink lots of fluids, stay well-hydrated
- Take anti-fever / pain-relieving medications as needed)
- Stay in the yellow zone until fully recovered, avoid all “public spaces” outside the home unless leaving to seek medical care
- Contact your family doctor or healthcare center if symptoms worsen, particularly if there is shortness of breath
- If available, have sick person wear a clean, disposable face mask as often as possible, especially when they interact with others in the household
- Keep a minimum 6 feet separation if possible⁶
- Don’t share food or drinks with others and keep all plates and cutlery used by sick person separate and wash after each meal
- If the sick person needs to go the clinic, and ambulance services are not available:
 - Place sick person in the most rear seat, with a mask or material over mouth to protect against respiratory droplets
 - Open car window, if practical, and ideally have sick person breathing outside

⁵ U.S. CDC (2020). COVID-19: Get your Home Ready. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/get-your-household-ready-for-COVID-19.html>

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- Only have driver and sick person in car – no additional passengers

If you had a close contact with a positive COVID-19 patient, or have been asked to self-quarantine, consider:

- Create a “Yellow zone – lite”
- The quarantined person likely cannot infect others until they develop symptoms
- Maintaining at least 6 feet from others in the home
- Monitor your health and temperature at least twice daily
- If you feel ill, immediately isolate yourself and contact your healthcare provider and/or follow local authority guidance
- The quarantined person should have a separate bedroom and limit their movements within the home
- Do not share food or drinks and use separate plates and cutlery
- Keep a daily log of the health status of the quarantined person, until quarantine is over

When will the Pandemic End?

It is expected that COVID-19 cases will rise for a number of weeks as testing becomes more prevalent, followed by a plateau, and finally case volumes will drop and eventually end as more people recover. This is called a pandemic “wave”. It could take from 6 weeks to 3-4 months for a wave to end, and for the virus to no longer impact your community. Some communities may have more cases, some may have less – some may recover quickly, others may take longer. The important issue is to remain vigilant and limit your risk to yourself, your family and the community until the authorities say it is ok to go back to more normal practices. Prepare to follow your household “zoning” behavior for at least a few months.

Document Information

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