

How does COVID-19 infect a person?

Human coronaviruses are most commonly spread from an infected person to others through close personal contact, such as touching or shaking hands, and touching the eyes, nose or mouth after touching an infected surface. In rare instances, the virus is spread by fecal contamination.

How can I help protect myself and others from exposure to COVID-19 and other respiratory illnesses?

To protect yourself and others from exposure to COVID-19 and other respiratory illnesses:

- Stay at home when experiencing flu-like symptoms;
- Practice social distancing by staying at least 6 feet apart from people if you need to leave your home;
- Wash hands thoroughly and often;
- Use cough/sneeze etiquette – cough/sneeze into a tissue or into your elbow, not hands – discard the tissue in a waste basket and clean hands with sanitizer or soap & water immediately;
- Frequently clean high-touch surfaces like counter-tops, keyboards, phones, light switches and doorknobs, etc.

What should I do if I have travelled outside of Nova Scotia?

The Province of Nova Scotia, under the authority of the Health Protection Act, is requiring anyone who has travelled outside Nova Scotia to self-isolate for 14 days upon return, even if they are symptom-free.

If you've travelled recently and you develop a fever, with a temperature 38°C or higher, or a cough, you should call 811 for assessment. Not everyone who has concerns about COVID-19 needs to call 811. To find out if you need to call, use the COVID-19 online self-assessment found at www.novascotia.ca.

If you need in-person assessment, 811 will refer you to a centre. Don't go to a COVID-19 assessment centre unless 811 referred you.

How to manage self-isolation or quarantine?

There are psychological impacts of self-isolation or quarantine. Our routines and daily interactions play a critical part in our social connections and identities.

Here are a few suggestions on how to best manage your time and mental health while physically away from your workplace.



- Get the facts – Obtain medical advice from trusted sources only. If you're concerned or need assistance with understanding what's needed, reach out to provincial support resources.
- Create a daily routine – Establish a daily process and set objectives. Don't let the basics slip. Create a dedicated workspace, maintain normal business hours and an adequate sleep schedule. Keep up with daily hygiene, chores and cleaning practices.
- Eating and hydration - Maintain a healthy diet and stay hydrated. Avoid high sugar snacks and beverages to avoid swings in mood and energy levels. A healthy immune system is best equipped to fight infections.
- Physical activity - Don't forget to move. Exercise and movement are good for your mind and body. Stay as active as possible and set reminders if necessary. There are online exercise programs designed for small spaces.
- Think about natural light - Natural light plays an important role in maintaining a positive outlook. Try to find a spot where natural light is available.
- Social connections – Stay engaged with your personal and professional support networks. If you start to feel overwhelmed or isolated, call or video-conference with family, friends, or peers. You never have to be alone.
- Mental fitness – Be active in supporting your mental health and resiliency. Practice and engage in online activities you find rewarding. Spend quality time within your household. Avoid extended time or attention on pandemic related news, read a book that promotes mental fitness and try starting a daily journal.

Are there other benefits that can support me during these times?

Your NSTU Group Insurance Trustees have worked hard to offer benefits that are available to support you and your family during this very challenging time. Some of these programs are:

- Resilience (Employee and Family Assistance Program (EFAP) – This program helps you reach a team of experienced counsellors from Homewood Health by phone.
- Your Wellness Partner – This is the newest offering focusing on mental health which provides multiple levels of support via telephone, online CBT modules, etc.
- HealthCareAssist Program – This provides individual case management of all types of medical conditions.
- Seniors' Care Assistance Program – This program will connect you to publicly-funded senior care resources.
- CAREpath Cancer Assistance Program – If you, your spouse or dependent children suspect having cancer, are diagnosed with cancer, or are already living with cancer, this program connects you with your own personal oncology nurse.

For more information on the above programs and all other benefits available to you, please visit the NSTU Group Insurance website at www.nstuinsurance.ca.