

## COVID-19 and Asthma — Health Advice for People with Asthma

Updated March 19, 2020

At this time, the [Public Health Agency of Canada \(PHAC\)](#) has noted there is an increased risk of more severe outcomes for Canadians:

- aged 65 and over
- with compromised immune systems
- with underlying medical conditions

### **Canadians are advised to avoid all non-essential travel.**

As the situation develops around the globe, you can find the most up-to-date information for people in Canada on the [Government of Canada's website](#). Be sure to also check provincial and local authorities for information specific to your location.

You might be wondering what COVID-19 means for you, or your loved ones with asthma. When people with asthma get respiratory infections, it can trigger their asthma symptoms. Most people recover from COVID-19 after a period of rest, that may extend up to 14 days. In some, it can be more severe and, in rare cases, life-threatening. The symptoms are similar to other much more common illnesses such as a cold or flu, and include:

- cough;
- high temperature or fever,
- shortness of breath.

People of all ages can be infected by the virus, which causes respiratory disease. People with underlying chronic conditions such as asthma, diabetes or heart disease appear to be more at risk of severe effects.

***Asthma Canada recommends that Canadians with asthma ensure they renew or refill their asthma prescriptions with a 30-day supply so that they don't run out of medication, should they become ill.***

***Asthma Canada recommends that Canadians with asthma continue to take their prescribed asthma medications unless their healthcare provider has advised otherwise. Stopping medication use may cause adverse health effects and is not recommended unless directed by your healthcare professional. Do not stop or modify your asthma medications because of concern about COVID-19.***

***This includes biologics.*** Biologics used to treat asthma do not have the same immuno-suppressing effects like biologics to treat other types of illnesses.

**To protect yourself and reduce your risk of asthma symptoms, follow these simple asthma management steps:**

- Keep taking your controller medication daily or as prescribed. This will help cut your risk of an asthma attack being triggered by any respiratory virus, including COVID-19.
- Carry your reliever inhaler with you every day, in case your asthma symptoms flare up.
- Monitor your asthma symptoms closely and follow your Asthma Action Plan to help you recognize and manage asthma symptoms, and know when to seek advice from your healthcare provider or emergency help.
- If you must travel, pack all asthma medications in your carry-on luggage so it is easily accessible. Pack extra asthma medication in case your travel plans change or are delayed. Be sure to check travel advice and advisories from the [Government of Canada's website](#).
- Take care of yourself. Get plenty of rest and fluids, and eat good nutritious food.
- Reach out to Asthma Canada's Asthma & Allergy HelpLine call-back service to connect with a Certified Respiratory Educator if you have questions about managing your asthma. Call 1-866-787-4050 or email [info@asthma.ca](mailto:info@asthma.ca)

**Below are also some straightforward steps everyone can take to lower the risk of getting and spreading COVID-19:**

- [Practice social distancing/self-monitoring/self-isolation/isolation](#) as directed by [the Public Health Agency of Canada](#).
- Wash your hands thoroughly and often with soap and warm water for at least 30 seconds.
- Cough or sneeze into a tissue or the bend of your arm, not your hand.

- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces, such as toys, phones and door handles.
- Stay home if you are sick. Encourage those you know who are sick to stay home until they no longer have symptoms.
- Try to avoid close contact with people who are unwell.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, ears or mouth.
- Make sure that you get high-quality information about COVID-19 from reliable sources. [The Public Health Agency of Canada](https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/covid-19) is a reliable source of information, as are provincial and territorial public health authorities.