

## Clinical advice from Sienna's Infection Control Partner

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I wanted to provide a clinical update on COVID-19 and answer some questions I have been hearing from the Sienna community. If you have further questions, please email [COVID-19questions@siennialiving.ca](mailto:COVID-19questions@siennialiving.ca) and we'll be sure to answer them.

### **What is social distancing?**

Social distancing involves taking steps to limit the number of people you come into close contact with. This will help to limit the spread of COVID-19 in the community.

Social distancing includes, but is not limited to:

- Avoiding non-essential trips in the community
- If you have to go into the community for an essential trip via taxi or rideshare, be sure to keep the windows down
- Whenever possible, spend time outside and in settings where people can maintain a one to two metre distance from each other and avoid crowds.

### **What is the difference between social distancing and self-isolation?**

While everyone should adopt social distancing to limit the spread of the virus, self-isolation must be used for those who have no symptoms, but may have been exposed to COVID-19 due to travel outside of Canada or close contact with a person diagnosed with the virus.

Self-isolation means:

- Stay at home and monitor yourself for symptoms for 14 days
- Avoid contact with other people in your home and community to help prevent the spread of disease, and contact your [Public Health Authority](#) as soon as possible, if you become symptomatic

### **Are there any new updates in terms of transmission route of COVID-19?**

After two and a half months of clinical experience with COVID-19 cases, here is what we know about the route of transmission for COVID-19:

- COVID-19 cases and clusters demonstrate that Droplet/Contact transmission are the routes of transmission
- The majority of cases are linked to person-to-person transmission through close direct contact with someone who is positive for COVID-19
- There is no evidence that COVID-19 is transmitted through the airborne route

### **What are the signs and symptoms of COVID-19?**

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), coronavirus symptoms can include:

- Fever
- Cough (usually dry)
- Shortness of breath
- Feeling tired and weak

Symptoms may appear two to 14 days after coming in contact with the virus.

### **What is the duration of transmission of COVID-19?**

The duration that someone could transmit COVID-19 is not yet known, but the person could be infectious for about three weeks or longer after developing symptoms.

### **Can you get infected twice with COVID-19?**

The antibodies against COVID-19 are thought to stay in your body and protect you against re-infection for some time, but the duration of protection is not yet known.

### **How can I avoid getting the Coronavirus and other respiratory infections?**

The steps you take to avoid the flu will also help protect you from COVID-19:

- Wash your hands often with soap and warm water for at least 15 seconds, always after coughing or sneezing. If you don't have access to running water, use an alcohol-based hand cleanser that is at least 70% alcohol
- Don't touch your eyes, nose or mouth
- Follow proper social distancing

- Stay away from people who are sick
- Don't share makeup, food, dishes or eating utensils

### How can I tell the difference between COVID-19, Flu, Cold or seasonal allergies?

This chart provides an overview of the difference in symptoms for COVID-19, a cold, the flu, and seasonal allergies.

Symptoms	Coronavirus* (COVID-19) <small>Symptoms range from mild to severe</small>	Cold <small>Gradual onset of symptoms</small>	Flu <small>Abrupt onset of symptoms</small>	Seasonal Allergies <small>Abrupt onset of symptoms</small>
 Length of symptoms	7-25 days	Less than 14 days	7-14 days	Several weeks
 Cough	Common (usually dry)	Common (mild)	Common (usually dry)	Rare (usually dry unless it triggers asthma)
 Shortness of breath	Sometimes	No**	No**	No**
 Sneezing	No	Common	No	Common
 Runny or stuffy nose	Rare	Common	Sometimes	Common
 Sore throat	Sometimes	Common	Sometimes	Sometimes (usually mild)
 Fever	Common	Short fever period	Common	No
 Feeling tired	Sometimes	Sometimes	Common	Sometimes
 Headaches	Sometimes	Rare	Common	Sometimes (related to sinus pain)
 Body aches and pains	Sometimes	Common	Common	No
 Diarrhea	Rare	No	Sometimes for children	No

\*Information is still evolving. \*\*Allergies, colds and flus can all trigger asthma, which can lead to shortness of breath. COVID-19 is the only one associated with shortness of breath on its own. Sources: Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America, World Health Organization, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

### Check out these additional resources

PHO: [Updated IPAC Recommendations for Use of Personal Protective Equipment for Care of Individuals with Suspect or Confirmed COVID-19](#). March 2020

CDC: [Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\) Update and Infection Prevention and Control Recommendations](#). March 2020

European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control: [Factsheet for health professionals on Coronaviruses](#)

CDC: [Preparing for COVID-19: Long-term Care Facilities, Nursing Homes](#)

AAFA: [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): What People With Asthma Need to Know](#)