

MS Essentials Tips

COVID-19 & Multiple Sclerosis

People with multiple sclerosis do not appear to have a higher risk of becoming infected with the virus (called SARS CoV-2) that causes COVID-19 or a risk of more serious illness. But it is important to protect yourself against infections – especially if you have other risk factors. These risk factors include older age (age 60 or older), physical disabilities due to your MS (e.g. limited mobility, swallowing difficulties), taking certain MS medications, or other medical illnesses (e.g. diabetes, heart conditions or lung diseases).

Essential measures to prevent infection:

- **Wash your hands frequently** with soap and water. Clean your hands before touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Use hand sanitizer (60-90% alcohol) when soap and water aren't available.
- **Isolate yourself.** Remain at home as much as possible. Quarantine yourself if you have any COVID-19 symptoms (fever, dry cough, sneezing, difficulty breathing).
- **Practice social distancing.** Stay at least 2 metres (6 feet) away from others.

5 steps to remaining well during the COVID-19 outbreak



Eat well. Maintain a healthy diet. Arrange to have your groceries delivered if you are self-isolating. Wash your hands after you unpack the groceries. Wash fruits and vegetables thoroughly before eating.



Get regular exercise. Try to remain active while at home. Go for a 20-minute walk every day. Dust off your exercise bike or treadmill. Or work out with one of the many exercise programs on YouTube. Exercise will help you maintain your mobility, improve your health and brighten your mood.



Stay on your MS medication. The disease-modifying therapies (DMT) used to treat MS are important to control your illness – even during the COVID-19 outbreak. If you're concerned about the medication you're taking or the need to go to a clinic to get treatment, talk to your neurologist or MS clinic. Abruptly stopping a DMT can result in severe MS symptoms – so DO NOT stop taking your DMT without consulting with your MS team first.



Get the help you need. Talk to your MS clinic if you require homecare services to manage day-to-day. Your MS nurse can provide you with a list of resources in your community and help ensure that you have access to the services you need.



Stay in contact. Self-isolation doesn't mean you can't socialize – it's important to your health and well-being to remain socially active. Stay in touch by phone, video chat or social media. If you belong to a self-help group, organize a virtual meeting to share your thoughts and concerns. Or start a group with other people living with MS in your community.