

Choosing Wisely COVID-19 Recommendations

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The COVID-19 pandemic presents an unprecedented challenge to the capacity of health care systems and providers around the world. Now, more than ever, stewardship of limited resources is critical.

In response, this list was developed to raise awareness about the need to use limited health care resources wisely. This is part of a list that includes public recommendations (1-4). To view the full list that includes clinician recommendations (5-9), visit: www.choosingwiselycanada.org/covid-19.

Recommendations for the public:

1

Don't go out for non-essential reasons. Keep a safe physical distance from others (2 m or 6 ft.) and follow guidance from your national and local public health authority.

Physical distancing, along with handwashing, are the most effective ways to reduce the spread of COVID-19. Avoid crowds, unnecessary travel, and social gatherings. Individuals should only go out for groceries, to the pharmacy, or other essential trips. Decreasing the spread of COVID-19 can help alleviate the pressure on the health care system.

For more information: [World Health Organization: Coronavirus Disease \(COVID-19\) Advice for the Public](#)

2

Don't go in person to a hospital, clinic, or health care provider for routine care (preventative visits, routine blood work) or non-essential care without calling ahead.

Avoiding these locations lowers personal risk of infection. Clinics, hospitals and facilities are determining what care will continue and what can be delayed or rescheduled. Some routine tests or procedures may not be necessary if an individual has no symptoms or risk factors, while others should not be delayed. Individuals should speak with their health care provider. Health care professionals are also offering care virtually.

For more information: [CMAJ: What can Early Canadian Experience Screening for COVID-19 Teach us About How to Prepare for a Pandemic?](#)
[Canadian Medical Association: Managing your Practice During COVID-19](#)

3

Don't go to the emergency department for evaluation of mild COVID-19 symptoms. Use virtual tools or assessment centres if available.

Individuals with mild symptoms of COVID-19 should not go to the emergency department for COVID-19 testing. Online self-assessment tools and dedicated screening centres can help people determine how to seek further care if necessary. Avoiding unnecessary calls to emergency services and trips to the emergency department will help protect vulnerable patients in the emergency department, as well as health professionals caring for them.

For more information: [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: What To Do if You Are Sick](#)
[BMJ: COVID-19: A Remote Assessment in Primary Care](#)
[CMAJ: What can Early Canadian Experience Screening for COVID-19 Teach us About How to Prepare for a Pandemic?](#)

4

Don't self-prescribe or request unproven therapies to prevent or treat COVID-19.

There are currently no vaccines, medications, or natural health products that are known to treat or protect against COVID-19. Using non-evidence-based treatments may expose patients to harm and lead to resource shortages. Additionally, antibiotics do not work against viral infections like COVID-19.

For more information: [Public Health Agency of Canada: Coronavirus Disease \(COVID-19\): Symptoms and Treatment](#)
[World Health Organization: Coronavirus Disease \(COVID-19\) Advice for the Public: Myth Busters](#)