

maple

# The ultimate COVID-19 resource guide

May 2020



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# Word from Dr. Brett



Dear Canadians,

This is one of the toughest times we've ever been through. It's put incredible emphasis on how much we depend on our healthcare system and how vital digital technologies are to maintaining the system in a time of crisis.

Getting through this challenge will require cooperation and dedication on an international level. The greatest tool we have is physical distancing. It seems strange that simply staying home could control a worldwide pandemic, but it's true.

We created this guide to give you necessary information you'll need for dealing with this new COVID-19 world. Rather than searching the web to identify sound, trustworthy content amongst the vast amounts of misinformation out there, you can find government recommendations and doctors' tips in the following pages.

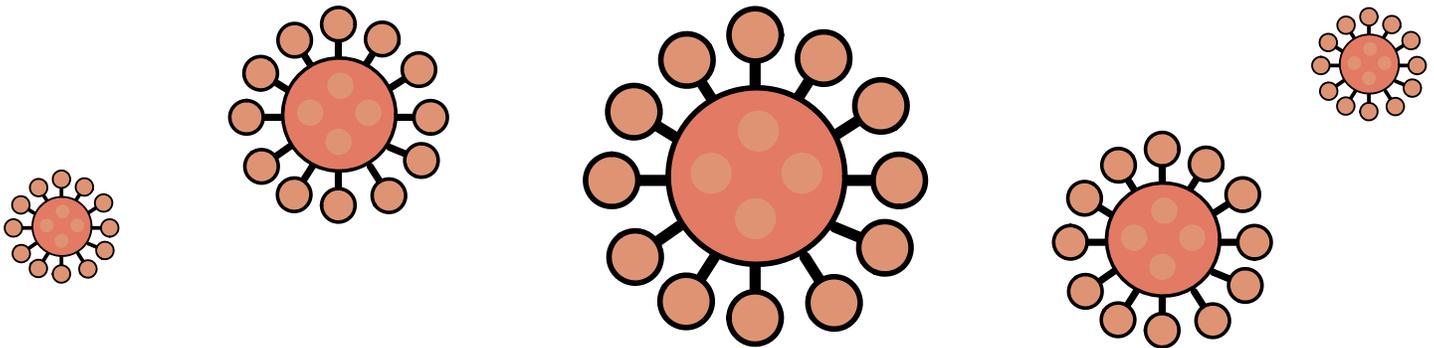
There's a lot of uncertainty in the world, but there's also a lot of hope and community support. Know that the medical community is working hard to protect you and your loved ones, including the team here at Maple.

Stay safe and healthy,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "B Belchetz".

Dr. Brett Belchetz  
ER Doctor & CEO of Maple

# The basics of COVID-19



## Quick facts about COVID-19:

- COVID-19 is a highly contagious virus that spreads through respiratory droplets, which are expelled when an infected person coughs or sneezes.
- People over 60 years of age or those with a compromised immune system are at higher risk of becoming critically ill.
- If you've been exposed to someone with a confirmed diagnosis of COVID-19 or have travelled in the past 14 days, you must self-quarantine.
- Some people who are infected with COVID-19 will show minimal symptoms. Others may show no symptoms at all, making it easy to transmit this virus unknowingly.
- If you're exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19, you must self-isolate.
- Everyone should practice physical distancing.\*

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The Government of Canada has laid out extensive resources for you to learn about COVID-19. [Click here](#) to visit their information portal.



\*Fun fact: The World Health Organization is now using the phrase "physical distancing" instead of "social distancing". This is because you should stay connected with friends and family to feel socially supported, even if you're staying apart physically.

# Government regulations

The Canadian Government is serious about slowing the spread of COVID-19. If you're found guilty of disobeying the [Quarantine Act](#), you could face up to six months in prison and/or a \$75,000 fine. Those who are found guilty of causing imminent death or serious bodily harm by willfully and recklessly defying the Act could face up to three years in prison, and/or a \$1,000,000 fine.

With that in mind, here's everything you need to know about self-isolation and self-quarantine.

## What is self-isolation?

- If you've travelled outside the country, and/or have symptoms of COVID-19 you're required to self-isolate in your home for 14 days.
- Don't go to work, school or other public areas.
- Stay in a separate room and use a separate bathroom from other people in your home, if possible.
- If you need to leave that room, wear a mask to limit the spread of particles if you cough.
- Arrange for someone else to deliver groceries, medication and other essential items to your doorstep.
- Don't allow visitors over.
- Don't isolate around vulnerable people (anyone over 60 or immunocompromised).
- Immediately contact your doctor or public health authority if your symptoms get worse.
- Only leave your home to seek medical attention.
- Rigorously clean all surfaces. A two-step process is best for this. First, clean surfaces with household cleaners, then use a disinfecting cleanser or wipe. This ensures that the virus can't hide from the disinfectant in everyday household dust and dirt.

## What is self-quarantine?

- If you don't have symptoms of COVID-19 but have recently returned from travelling, or if you've been exposed to COVID-19, you should self-quarantine.
- Stay in your quarantine location for 14 days.
- Arrange for someone else to deliver groceries, medication and other essential items to your doorstep.
- Don't have visitors over.
- You can get fresh air on your balcony or in your backyard, but don't leave your home property.
- Keep at least a 2 meter distance between yourself and other members of your household. You can wear a mask when around others for added protection.
- If you develop COVID-19 symptoms within 14 days, follow the instructions for self-isolation and call your doctor or public health authority. Be sure to describe your symptoms and any recent travel history.
- Rigorously clean all surfaces. A two-step process is best for this. First, clean surfaces with household cleaners, then use a disinfecting cleanser or wipe. This ensures that the virus can't hide from the disinfectant in everyday household dust and dirt.

# Why is COVID-19 so dangerous?

COVID-19 has a couple negatives going for it: a long incubation time, and ease at infecting people. Even if you look and feel healthy, you could be carrying the virus for up to two weeks before ever showing symptoms. During that time it's possible to spread the virus to other people, who could then become asymptomatic carriers as well.

Scientists have noted that the virus seems to be particularly talented at attaching to our lungs, more so than previous viruses like SARS. That's why it's important we take strong measures to contain the spread; we're not dealing with an ordinary virus.

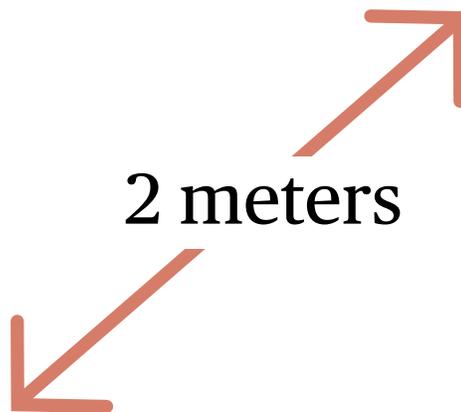
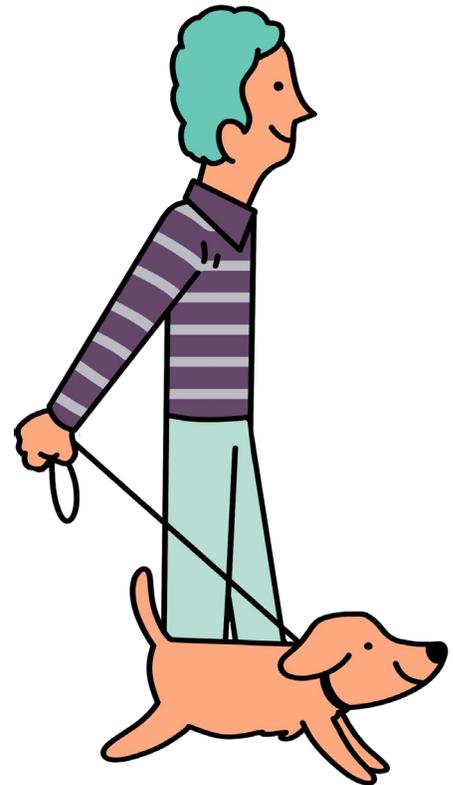


# What you can do to slow the spread of COVID-19

All Canadians are encouraged to practice physical distancing. Depending on where you live, there may even be fines if you break physical distancing rules. This is because some people with COVID-19 won't even know they're sick, so it's very easy to transmit the virus unknowingly.

Remember that even if you don't feel sick, physical distancing is the best way to keep yourself and those around you safe. Here's how to physically distance like a pro:

- Stay at home except for essential trips, such as picking up groceries or medication.
- Avoid common greetings like handshakes. Waving and finger pistols are popular alternatives.
- Keep 2 arms lengths (approximately 2 meters) from other people.
- Limit your contact with high-risk individuals: senior citizens, and those with immune system deficiencies or underlying health conditions.



Physical distancing alone isn't enough to prevent catching COVID-19. You should also practice good hygiene and household cleaning habits to eliminate the virus. These include:

- Washing your hands multiple times a day, for at least 20 seconds each time. Be sure to get every surface including between your fingers. Make sure to wash your hands after coughing or sneezing, after visiting public spaces like a bus or grocery store, before and after eating, and while you're caring for a sick person.
- Using hand sanitizer if soap and water aren't available.
- Coughing or sneezing into a tissue or your elbow.
- Avoiding touching your face with unwashed hands.
- Disinfecting high-touch surfaces like your phone, doorknobs, TV remotes, and children's toys frequently.
- Using a two-step cleaning process for other household surfaces to eliminate dust and dirt before disinfecting surfaces. This will ensure viral particles can't hide out from your disinfectant.

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If you're worried about unknowingly infecting those around you, a mask can prevent you from spraying out respiratory droplets. If you're unable to buy a mask, you can use homemade ones made of cloth. Here's a few tips for homemade masks:

- Make sure it fits well, so there are no gaps between the mask and your face.
- Dispose of your mask once it's damp or soiled.
- Wash your hands before putting a face mask on, and after taking it off.
- Don't share your mask with anyone else.
- Dispose of your mask in a plastic bag lined waste bin. Don't leave your mask in a shopping cart, or on the ground.



# Assessing your risk

All the news headlines surrounding COVID-19 make it confusing to assess your personal risk of catching the disease.

## Here's what we know:

- Most COVID-19 cases are mild, and some are so mild, that people don't even know they're sick.
- While people over the age of 60 and people with compromised immune systems are at greater risk, even young, healthy people can become critically ill from COVID-19.
- Physical distancing and good hygiene can reduce your risk.
- One of the first steps in understanding COVID-19 and managing anxiety around the subject is to assess your personal risk factors.

## To assess your risks, ask yourself these questions:

1. Have you been exposed to someone who's tested positive for COVID-19?  
"Exposure" is defined as living in the same household, having face-to-face contact, or being within 2 meters of an infected person for longer than 15 minutes.

2. Are you experiencing any symptoms of COVID-19?  
The most common symptoms include fever, dry cough and shortness of breath.

3. Have you recently travelled to a country that's been issued a [Travel Health Notice](#)?

4. Are you over age 60?

5. Do you suffer from any conditions that suppress your immune system?

6. Do you have any chronic health conditions such as asthma, diabetes or heart disease?

7. Have you experienced a loss of smell or taste?

Studies show that up to 2/3 of those infected with COVID experience this symptom.

If you are considered at higher risk of becoming critically ill, you should be extra careful to limit your trips outside the home, wash your hands and disinfect your living space.

# Immunity tips

Your immune system is your body's network of defense mechanisms that identifies and fights off infection. A strong immune system will lower your risk of contracting infectious diseases, including coronaviruses, and help you recover quicker if you do get sick.

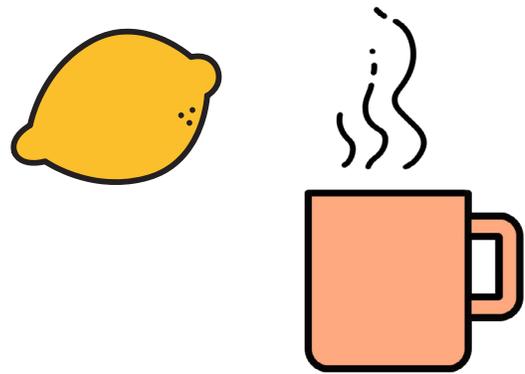
## Tip #1 - Eat a healthy diet

Eat a wide variety of unprocessed foods that contain vitamins, fiber and protein. Saute some spinach or kale, or make a smoothie using your favourite berry mix.



## Tip #2 - Stay hydrated

Your body needs to be hydrated to perform many basic functions, such as temperature regulation. Sip on some herbal tea, fruit-infused water, or plain old H<sub>2</sub>O to keep your body happy.



## Tip #3 - Get your Zzzz's

Sleep is so important for your immune system! While you're sleeping, your body recovers from the previous day's stresses. Lack of sleep can negatively impact your T cells, which are the white blood cells that make up the foundation of your immune system.

## Tip #4 - Stop smoking or vaping

There has never been a better time to quit smoking. COVID-19 attacks the lungs, so anyone with a compromised respiratory system is at greater risk for catching the virus and for developing advanced complications of the disease. Evidence suggests that chronic smokers are having worse outcomes from COVID-19. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), those who smoke are likely to be more vulnerable to infection.



### **Tip #5 - Exercise moderately**

There are lots of ways you can exercise while physically distancing. Follow along with an online cardio workout, go for a jog, or do some bodyweight exercises like planks or push ups. Exercise helps manage your stress, and mobilizes your white blood cells.

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### **Tip #7 - Follow hygiene guidelines**

The less exposure you have to the virus, the less work your immune system will have to do to fight it off. There's some evidence to suggest that "viral load" is a factor for patients with serious cases of COVID-19. The more virus you're exposed to, the harder your immune system will be hit. So, wash your hands!

### **Tip #6 - Avoid alcohol**

Resist the temptation to spice up your extended time at home with a couple glasses of wine. Alcohol depresses your entire immune system, and excessive drinking is linked to pneumonia (a dangerous complication of COVID-19).

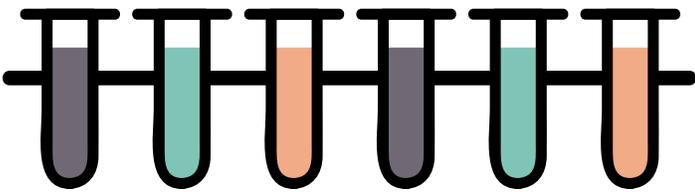
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### **Tip #8 - Manage your stress levels**

Easier said than done given current events, right? But, managing stress is one of the best things for keeping your immune system in tip top shape. Try yoga, meditation, or taking up a new hobby. Talk to friends and family by phone or video to reaffirm your social connections. Having a positive mental attitude is a huge tool in helping you get through tough times.

## When will a vaccine be ready?

The estimated timeline for a COVID-19 vaccine is 18-24 months. While that might sound like forever, it's extremely fast in terms of vaccines. A lot of the time, diseases are successfully contained before a vaccine is finished development. The best thing we can do to corral COVID-19 is to follow physical distancing, self-isolation and self-quarantine guidelines.



## What does it mean to “flatten the curve”?

When scientists talk about “the curve”, they’re referring to the projected number of new cases of COVID-19 over a period of time. Since COVID-19 spreads so easily, the curve can increase rapidly. If and when that happens, our hospitals could become overwhelmed by an influx of patients.

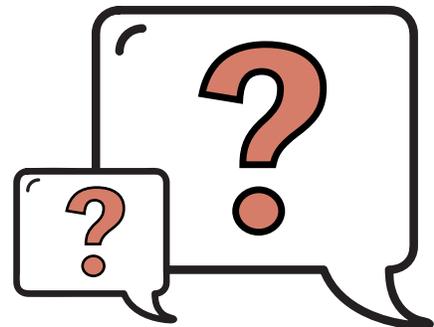
To flatten the curve, we have to slow the spread of COVID-19. We can do that by staying home, self-isolating and self-quarantining when necessary, and following government safety guidelines. That way, hospitals will have enough resources to treat the patients who do come in with emergency cases.

## Is taking Advil dangerous if I have COVID-19?

Scientific studies haven't yet confirmed if taking anti-inflammatory drugs can make COVID-19 worse. There's some truth behind the idea that taking medication to get rid of symptoms can have a small impact on your recovery time. So, if you feel like you can muscle through your illness without taking medication, you might get better faster. If you regularly take anti-inflammatory medication to manage chronic conditions, keep taking these drugs to maintain your quality of life.

## When can I stop self-isolating/self-quarantining?

If you've been assigned to self-isolation, talk to your doctor or public health about when it's safe to resume normal living. If you've been in self-quarantine and have shown no symptoms the whole time, you can stop after 14 days.



## When should I see a doctor?

If you're having trouble breathing or other severe symptoms, call 911. Tell the dispatcher that you may have COVID-19 so that first responders can wear the appropriate protective equipment.

If you're having standard symptoms like a fever, dry cough or fatigue, don't self-diagnose. Contact public health, or see a doctor online for a COVID-19 screening.

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## Are pregnant women at elevated risk of contracting COVID-19?

Current evidence suggests that pregnant women don't have a higher risk for contracting COVID-19 than the general public. If you're pregnant, you should still be sure to practice physical distancing.



## How do I know if I have a regular cold/flu, or COVID-19?

This is an awkward time to get sick! You could have a run-of-the-mill cold or flu, or it could be your allergies acting up. If you're sneezing, have a runny nose or a mucousy cough, you probably don't have COVID-19.

Look at these checklists to see what matches up best with the symptoms you're experiencing.

### Flu symptoms:

- Cough
- Fever
- Fatigue
- Stuffy/runny nose (less commonly)
- Sore throat
- Body aches

### Most common symptoms of COVID-19:

- Cough
- Fever
- Fatigue
- Body aches
- Shortness of breath
- Loss of smell or taste

### Allergy symptoms:

- Itchy eyes
- Stuffy nose
- Sneezing

COVID-19 is characterized by a dry cough. If your cough is anything but dry, it's more likely that you're experiencing seasonal sickness.

If you're concerned about your symptoms, you can speak to a doctor online to get an expert opinion.

# Adapting to the “new normal”

We have to stay home to do our part in flattening the curve, but that doesn't mean we can't make the most of every day. Here are some tips to keep you rocking and rolling during quarantine.

## Tip #1 - Establish a routine

Our bodies thrive on routine. Go to bed and wake up at the same time everyday, carve out time for meals, and incorporate breaks into your schedule.



## Tip #2 - Pick a project

Make productive use of your downtime by picking a new project to take on, or a subject to learn about. There are lots of free online tutorials to help you learn new skills like coding, dancing, knitting, or sourdough bread baking.

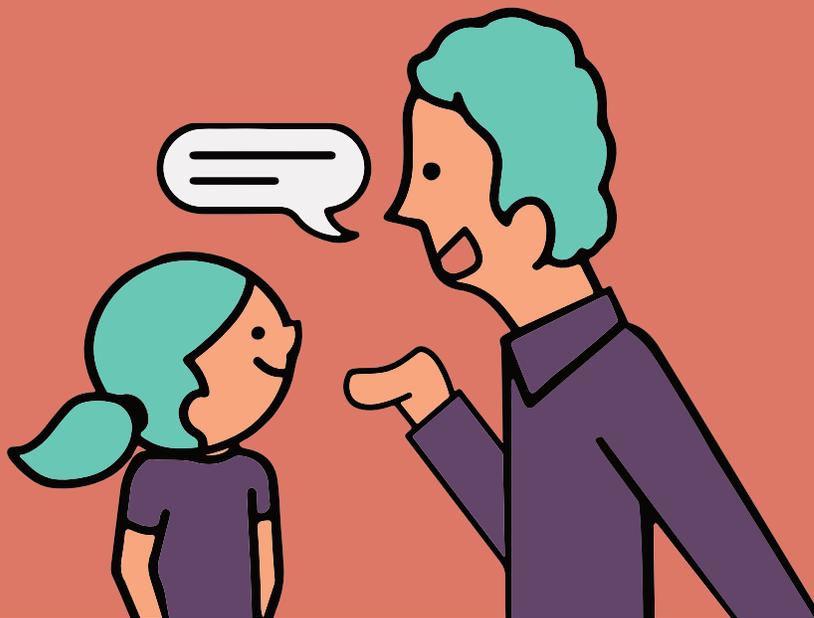
## Tip #3 - Think big picture

It's tense not knowing exactly when physical distancing measures will end. Try not to focus on the “what-ifs”. Instead, think of the positive impact you're making in your community by staying inside and taking care to physically distance.

## Tip #4 - Stay social

It's more important than ever that we stay connected to loved ones, even from afar. Make time each week for phone calls, zoom parties, and catch ups. Check in with people who don't have a strong support network. Communities often rise to the challenge of caring for each other in tough times.





## Tips for parents

### Tip #5 - Have 1-on-1 time

Even though you might be around your kids all day, try and set aside some “quality time” with just you and each of your kids. Quarantining at home is a big adjustment for children, and 1-on-1 time will help them feel seen and cared for.

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### Tip #7 - Get daily exercise to wear the kids out

A hyper kid is a rowdy kid. Invent a daily exercise routine that has them dancing, jumping, and moving their body first thing in the morning. If you live in a house, utilize the backyard. It’ll be much more peaceful in your household if you’ve zapped some energy out of the kids.

### Tip #6 - Make hand washing fun

Kids are notorious for cutting corners with their hand washing. To clean up their act, make a fun game out of handwashing. You can assign points for each time they wash their hands, or pick a fun song to sing that’s at least 20 seconds long.

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### Tip #8 - Talk about COVID-19

Your kids are aware that something strange is going on, but they might be fuzzy on the details. You can help them understand what’s happening in the world by sitting down and having an age-appropriate conversation. Explain what a virus is, talk about the protective measures you’re taking, and reassure your kids that they’re safe. You can also ask an open-ended question such as “How are you feeling right now,” to gauge their mood.

# Grocery shopping tips

## Tip #9 - Shop at off-peak hours

It's hard to keep your physical distance from other people in a grocery store if you're all reaching for the same tomato. Try to shop when there's less total people in the store. Peak grocery shopping hours are 4pm-6pm on weekdays and afternoon on weekends. Shopping outside of these hours will help you avoid being in close proximity to others.

## Tip #11 - Ask about senior shopping hours

If you're a senior citizen, it's especially important you don't get close to potential COVID-19 carriers. Many grocery stores and pharmacies have set aside business hours exclusively dedicated to seniors, usually in the early morning. Or, you could take advantage of a grocery delivery service like Instacart for an added layer of security.



## Tip #10 - Don't touch any surfaces

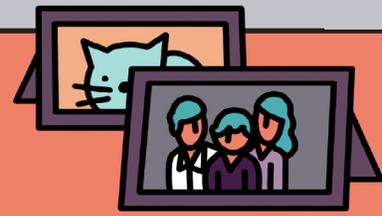
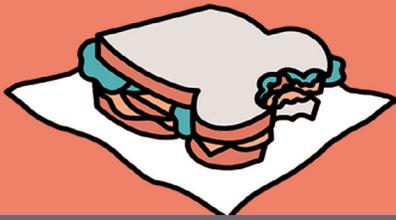
Who knows who's passed through the grocery store earlier and touched that exact same surface! To be safe, wear plastic gloves and don't touch any surfaces (including shelves, fridge door handles, and food items) you don't have to. Importantly, don't touch a surface and then touch your face.

## Tip #12 - Bring disinfectant wipes

Bring a package of disinfectant wipes (like Lysol) with you on your shopping trip. You can whip one out to disinfect your shopping basket or cart, and any door handles you might encounter when reaching into the dairy or frozen sections.

## Tip #13 - Use a delivery service if you're sick

It's important to stay at home if you're showing any symptoms of COVID-19. There are lots of grocery delivery services you can use, and some of them are even waiving the delivery fee for every new customer's first purchase.



## Tips for physical and mental health

### Tip #14 - Look for gyms offering virtual classes

Lots of businesses have quickly adapted to serving their customers at home, digitally. Lots of businesses have quickly adapted to serving their customers digitally. Gyms are no exception. Inquire if your gym or fitness studio is now offering online classes. If not, a quick search on YouTube will reveal hundreds of workouts for you to follow along with.

### Tip #16 - Try new recipes

Your health and fitness has so much to do with how you fuel your body. Why not take advantage of your time at home to spice up your cooking? Buy some vegetables, spices, or grains you've never tried before and find an inspiring new recipe. You might just come away with a new favourite dish.

If you want to get really adventurous, a band of Toronto chefs have put together this amazing [Open Source Cookbook](#). While restaurants might be temporarily closed, the bright culinary minds behind them are still going strong.

### Tip #15 - Go for a jog

It's a running joke (pardon the pun) that everyone has suddenly taken up jogging during quarantine. It's no wonder; jogging is a great cardio workout, and it's excellent at clearing the mind. Just make sure to keep 2 meters away from all the other joggers you pass on your outing.

### Tip #17 - Don't check the news too much

It can be hard to get away from dire news headlines and constant reminders of COVID-19. The thing is, constantly checking the news only stresses you out. Check the news once a day. You won't miss anything important in a 24 hour timespan, and you'll have more headspace to focus on happier topics. In addition, choose your sources carefully. Here are some trustworthy authorities:

- [The World Health Organization](#)
- [Health Canada](#)
- [Your local public health unit](#)

It's completely understandable to be concerned about current events. We're all experiencing a very new phenomenon and have had to adjust our lives drastically. We thank everyone who's doing their part to take health and safety precautions to slow the spread of COVID-19. Together, we can make a huge difference.

If you're feeling sick, have questions about your health, or need a prescription refill, Maple can connect you to a licensed physician online. It's like a virtual house call — open the app, describe your symptoms, and choose the type of provider you'd like to see. We work with General Practitioners, and ER Physicians as well as a wide range of specialists like psychotherapists, dietitians, dermatologists and more.

Maple makes it easy to see a doctor from the comfort of your home, so you can stay safely isolated while getting the medical attention you need. Now that's healthcare on your terms.





# A bit about Maple

Maple is a technology platform that tackles some of the world's most meaningful issues in healthcare, starting with timely and convenient access to doctors and other healthcare providers. It allows patients to connect directly with doctors for medical care in minutes from their smartphone or computer 24/7, and also provides custom technology solutions for hospitals and clinics seeking to advance their delivery of care.

Online healthcare, whenever and wherever you need it.  
Learn more at [getmaple.ca](https://getmaple.ca).

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