



Learn how to care for yourself effectively at home

Need advice? Call **Info Santé 811** and speak to a nurse, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. It's free and confidential.

[Have an urgent health problem?](#)

[Flu, COVID, Respiratory Viruses](#)

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Have an urgent health problem?

- Go to the Emergency.
- Call 911 if necessary.

This content is not intended to be a substitute for professional medical advice or medical care. If you are worried about your health, see a health professional.

Flu, COVID, Respiratory Viruses

Respiratory viruses can cause fever, fatigue, cough, muscle aches, headaches, congestion and sore throat. COVID can result in a loss of taste or smell.

What to do at home

- Rest: Rest as much as possible.
- Hydration: Drink plenty of water, herbal tea or broth.

- **Nose:** If congested, do a nasal rinse. Use a saltwater solution purchased from the pharmacy or a homemade solution: 4 cups of water, 2 teaspoons of salt and ½ teaspoon of baking soda.
- **Medication:** Speak to your pharmacist to make sure you are buying the products that are right for you.
- **Elevate:** Sleep with your head slightly elevated.
- **Distance:** To reduce the risk of making others sick, keep your distance or wear a mask.

Emergency—call 911 if

- You have trouble breathing.
- You have chest pain.
- You have trouble urinating.
- You are confused.
- Your lips are blue.
- You have an extremely severe headache that came on suddenly.
- You have trouble staying awake.
- You have a seizure.

When to seek professional help

- Your temperature is not going down in spite of taking medication.
- You have had a fever for more than two days with no improvement.
- You have stomach pain or are vomiting.
- Spots, patches or redness appear on your skin.
- You recently traveled to a country where, according to the Government of Canada, there are health risks (travel.gc.ca).

How to get help

- 24/7, dial 811.
- Call your pharmacist.
- Make an appointment at your medical clinic.
- If you do not have a doctor, dial 811 option 3.

- Find an appointment on rvsq.gouv.qc.ca.
- Screening: clicsante.ca or 1 877 644-4545.

[Download the printable information sheet \(PDF\)](#)

Fever

A normal body temperature is between 35.5 °C and 37.5 °C (95.9 °F and 99.5 °F). Having a fever is a sign that you are sick. Your body raises its temperature to protect itself. A thermometer reading of 38 °C (100.4 °F) or higher means you have a fever.

What to do at home

- Rest: Help your body fight off the infection by resting.
- Hydrate: Drink plenty of water, herbal tea or broth.
- Medication: If there are no contraindications, take medications such as acetaminophen (Tylenol) or ibuprofen (Advil). Follow the pharmacist's instructions and advice carefully.
- Temperature: Dress lightly, avoid blankets that are too heavy or too warm. Keep the house at a comfortable temperature.
- Bath: Take a warm bath to bring down the fever. Avoid cold showers and cold baths.
- Follow-up: Take note of your symptoms and temperature. This information could be useful if you have to call [811](#) to speak with a nurse.

Emergency—call 911 if

- You have trouble breathing.
- You have chest pain.
- You have trouble urinating.
- You are confused.

When to seek professional help

- Your temperature rises above 39 °C (102 °F) and is not going down in spite of taking medication.
- You have had a fever for more than two days with no improvement.
- You have stomach pain or are vomiting.

- Spots, patches or redness appear on your skin.
- You recently traveled to a country where, according to the Government of Canada, there are health risks (travel.gc.ca).

How to get help

- 24/7, dial [811](https://1811.ca).
- Call your pharmacist.
- Make an appointment at your medical clinic.
- If you do not have a doctor, dial [811](https://1811.ca) option 3.
- Find an appointment on rvsq.gouv.qc.ca.
- Screening: clicsante.ca or [1 877 644-4545](https://18776444545.ca).

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Sore Throat

A sore throat can be very painful, cause a burning feeling and prevent you from swallowing properly for a few days.

What to do at home

- Mouth rinse: Add a teaspoon of salt to a glass of boiled water that has cooled. Rinse your mouth and the back of your throat (gargle) several times a day.
- Hydration: Drink hot or cold beverages, depending on what feels best.
- Ice: Suck on ice cubes or eat frozen treats to help ease the pain.
- Food: Eat easy to swallow foods: soups, purées, eggs, cottage cheese or yogurt.

Emergency—call 911 if

- You have trouble breathing.

When to seek professional help

- Your throat has been sore for more than three days and you are not getting better.
- You have a fever and your temperature is not going down, even after taking medication.

- You have a great deal of difficulty speaking or swallowing.
- There are changes in the colour or texture of your skin (like sandpaper).

How to get help

- 24/7, dial 811.
- Call your pharmacist.
- Make an appointment at your medical clinic.
- If you do not have a doctor, dial 811 option 3.
- Find an appointment on rvsq.gouv.qc.ca.
- Screening: clicsante.ca or 1 877 644-4545.

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Cough

Coughing is a reflex and the body's way of clearing irritants or congestion.

What to do at home

- Rest: Rest as much as possible.
- Hydration: Drink plenty of water, herbal tea or broth.
- Nose: If congested, do a nasal rinse. Use a saltwater solution purchased from the pharmacy or a homemade solution: 4 cups of boiled water that has cooled, 2 teaspoons of salt and ½ teaspoon of baking soda
- Medication: Speak to your pharmacist to make sure you are buying the products that are right for you.
- Elevate: Sleep with your head slightly elevated.
- Distance: To reduce the risk of making others sick, keep your distance or wear a mask.

Emergency—call 911 if

- You have trouble breathing.
- You have chest pain.

When to seek professional help

- Your temperature is very high and is not going down despite taking medication.
- You have been coughing for several days despite at-home care.
- You have spots on your skin and an unusual cough that sounds like barking.
- You are coughing up blood.
- You have pain when you cough.
- You are tired or weak.

How to get help

- 24/7, dial 811.
- Call your pharmacist.
- Make an appointment at your medical clinic.
- If you do not have a doctor, dial 811 option 3.
- Find an appointment on rvsq.gouv.qc.ca.
- Screening: clicsante.ca or 1 877 644-4545.

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Gastro

Gastroenteritis, also known as gastro or stomach flu, is a problem that affects the stomach and intestines. It can cause diarrhea, vomiting, fever and stomach cramps. It is very contagious.

What to do at home

- Rest: Help your body fight off the infection by resting.
- Hydration: Try to drink small amounts of water. You can also buy a rehydration solution or make your own at home: 360 ml of unsweetened orange juice, 600 ml of boiled water that has cooled and 2.5 ml (½ teaspoon) of salt.
- Diet: Eat easy to digest foods such as bananas, rice, soda crackers or boiled potatoes.

Emergency—call 911 if

- There is a lot of blood in your stool.
- Your stool is black.
- Your vomit looks like coffee grounds.
- You have diarrhea, are extremely thirsty and have not urinated in more than 12 hours.
- You have chest pain.
- You are becoming weaker, sleepy, confused or irritable.
- You have diarrhea and severe stomach pain.
- You are vomiting often with no improvement after four hours.
- You have had diarrhea for more than one week.

When to seek professional help

- You have diarrhea and your bowel movements are frequent and heavy.
- You see a little blood in your stool.
- You are unable to drink or keep fluids down.
- You have diarrhea and a fever that will not go away.
- You have been vomiting for more than 48 hours with no improvement.
- You recently traveled to a country that, according to the Government of Canada (travel.gc.ca), poses a health risk.

How to get help

- 24/7, dial 811.
- Call your pharmacist.
- Make an appointment at your medical clinic.
- If you do not have a doctor, dial 811 option 3.
- Find an appointment on rvsq.gouv.qc.ca.
- Screening: clicsante.ca or 1 877 644-4545.

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Psychological Distress

Distress is a feeling of anguish or imbalance that can occur at any time. Sadness, anxiety, irritability or trouble sleeping and concentrating are signs of distress.

Self-care

- Breathe: Inhale slowly through the nose and exhale gently through the mouth.
- Feelings: Talk about your feelings with someone you trust. If that person isn't available, writing down your thoughts can be helpful.
- Temporary feeling: Distress is often temporary. Remember that unpleasant emotions fade with time.
- Location: Go somewhere that makes you feel good.
- Relaxing activity: Do something relaxing: listen to soothing music, read a book or meditate.

Emergency—call 911 if

- You are thinking about harming yourself or others.
- You are losing control.

When to seek professional help

- You are experiencing distress.
- You have trouble concentrating, sleeping, eating, or performing your regular activities because of how you are feeling.
- You feel like you are no longer able to manage your emotions or cope with certain situations.
- You are very anxious or depressed.
- Your sadness or worries are robbing you of your ability to do things you enjoy.

How to get help

- 24/7, dial 811, option 2 to speak with a psychosocial worker.
- Call the [1 866 APPELLE](#) helpline.
- Go to your CLSC.
- If you have a case worker, call them.

- Call Drugs Help and Referral – Alcohol, Drugs and Medication at 1 800 461-0140 or aidedrogue.ca.
- Make an appointment at your medical clinic.
- If you do not have a doctor, dial 811, option 3.
- Find an appointment on rvsq.gouv.qc.ca.

[Download the printable information sheet \(PDF\)](#)

Have you heard of the mental health app called [AppSantéMentale](#)?

It's where you will find reliable digital tools to help you look after your mental health.

Other information sheets

There are several other information sheets available to help you treat a range of common health problems such as cuts, sprains, pain, urinary tract infections and much more.

- [Allergies](#)
- [Constipation](#)
- [Cuts](#)
- [Painful Urination](#)
- [Sprain](#)
- [Exhaustion](#)
- [Dizziness](#)
- [Eye Pain](#)
- [Back Pain](#)
- [Headache](#)
- [Nausea](#)
- [Health resources](#)
- [Actions aimed at making the healthcare network more effective](#)