

Questions about COVID-19

What is COVID-19?

COVID-19 is a virus belonging to the Coronavirus family. The symptoms of COVID-19 are similar to those of the common cold or flu. These may include fever, cough, shortness of breath and breathing difficulties. In more severe cases, the infection can cause pneumonia and even death. The current outbreak has spread to many countries throughout the world, and has had a major impact on life in Canada.

For more information, read: <https://arrivein.com/en/daily-life-in-canada/covid-19-resources-for-newcomers-in-canada/>

How to protect yourself and your family

The government of Canada is recommending you and your family stay at home and practice “Social Distancing” as much as possible. This means that you should refrain from visiting with people not currently living in your home, in order to limit your exposure to people who may potentially be infected with the virus, and also limit your potential to infect others if you happen to be infected yourself.

Please wash your hands often, disinfect surfaces regularly and often, cough or sneeze into a tissue (and immediately discard it) or your elbow, avoid touching your eyes and face.

If you think you may have the virus, check your provincial government sites to find out about regulations and programs, self-assessment, self-monitoring, or to locate your public health unit.



For more information, read: <https://arrivein.com/en/daily-life-in-canada/covid-19-resources-for-newcomers-in-canada/>

What is social distancing?

As part of the Canadian approach to this unprecedented situation, we are working together by staying apart. By changing our habits we can all do our part to reduce close contact. Restaurants and many businesses have been closed, concerts and festivals postponed, and professional sports have been paused. We should follow suit and avoid group gatherings. As we have learned, older people and those with compromised immune systems are at higher risk, so let's take care to limit physical contact with them. But don't forget to phone or video call.

For more information, read: <https://arrivein.com/en/daily-life-in-canada/covid-19-resources-for-newcomers-in-canada/>

What does flatten the curve mean?

Flattening the curve refers to controlling the spread of COVID-19, specifically related to our healthcare system and its capacity to treat cases. Without precautions, the number of cases mounts rapidly, causing the curve to spike, exceeding the system's capacity, taxing resources and taking a toll on health workers.

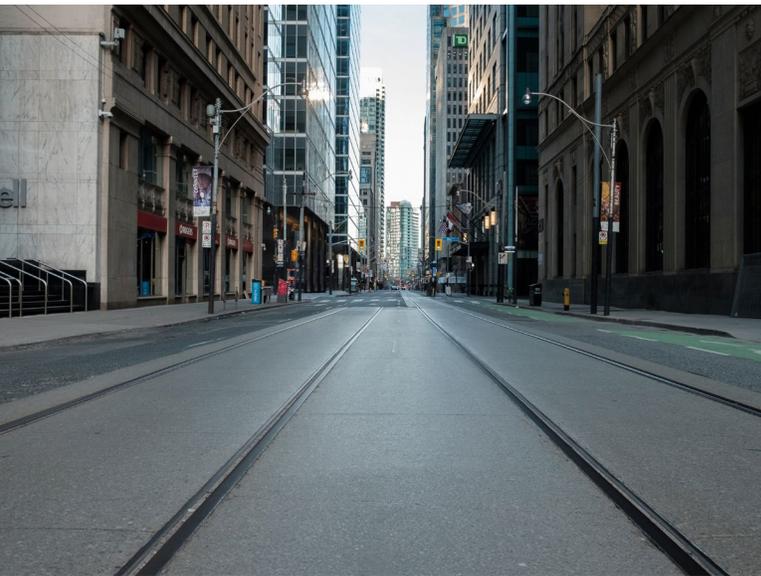
With proper precautions like handwashing, and thoughtful actions like social distancing, the number of cases grows far less quickly, allowing the system to function within its capacity and to cope with the demands of the pandemic.

For more information, read: <https://arrivein.com/en/daily-life-in-canada/covid-19-resources-for-newcomers-in-canada/>



Questions about government response to COVID-19

My province has declared a state of emergency, what does that mean?



A number of Canadian provinces (including BC, ON, NS, SK, MB, NB) have declared a state of emergency due to the current COVID-19 outbreak. In Canada, the declaration of a state of emergency is a way to grant various levels of government extraordinary temporary powers to fight an emergency such as a natural disaster, war or disease outbreak. It gives governments the power to close businesses, use facilities for care spaces, allows emergency responders to procure on a first priority basis any clothing, equipment, medical supplies or other essential supplies required to cope with the emergency.

https://www.huffingtonpost.ca/entry/state-of-emergency-coronavirus-canada_ca_5e73fb04c5b6f5b7c541424f

I am approved for Permanent Residence and was planning on arriving in Canada soon, but Canada has closed its borders, what can I do?

If you were approved for PR prior to March 16, 2020 then you are still allowed to enter Canada. However you may face restrictions on leaving your current country of residence, depending on the country. If you do decide to come to Canada, you will have to self-isolate for at least 14 days upon arrival, and may be unable to perform basic administrative tasks such as obtaining a Social Insurance Number, or opening a bank account. Finding accommodation and other basic life necessities may also be difficult at this time.

<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/news/2020/03/canada-provides-update-on-exemptions-to-travel-restrictions-to-protect-canadians-and-support-the-economy.html>

I am a temporary foreign worker, and my visa is almost up: will I have to leave Canada during this time of crisis?

The government of Canada may be announcing some changes and extensions to visa programs for foreign workers in light of the current crisis.

Check the IRCC website for details about your specific situation: <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/news/2020/03/canada-provides-update-on-exemptions-to-travel-restrictions-to-protect-canadians-and-support-the-economy.html>

I am an international student and was supposed to come to Canada to study, but Canada has closed its borders, what can I do?

If your study visa was approved prior to March 18, 2020, you are technically exempt from the travel ban and are able to come to Canada. However you may face restrictions on leaving your current country of residence, depending on the country. Most post-secondary campuses are currently closed: you should probably reach out to the institution you were planning to study at, for guidance on how to proceed. If you do decide to come to Canada, you will have to self-isolate for at least 14 days upon arrival.

<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/news/2020/03/canada-provides-update-on-exemptions-to-travel-restrictions-to-protect-canadians-and-support-the-economy.html>



Questions about government benefits to workers

I've been laid off due to the COVID-19 crisis, do I get access to Employment Insurance?

Your employer must issue you a Record of Employment (ROE). If you have worked at least 600 hours in the past year, you will be eligible for Employment Insurance.

For more information and to apply online visit: <https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/corporate/notices/coronavirus.html>

I'm sick or in quarantine due to COVID-19 and can't work, do I get access to Employment Insurance?

If you have worked for at least 600 hours in the past year, then Employment Insurance (EI) sickness benefits can provide you with up to 15 weeks of financial assistance if you cannot work for medical reasons. You could receive 55% of your earnings up to a maximum of \$573 a week. During this current crisis, the one-week wait time is exceptionally waived. Call the following toll-free number: 1-833-381-2725

<https://www.canada.ca/en/services/benefits/ei/ei-sickness.html>

If you don't qualify for EI Sickness benefits, you may qualify for the Emergency Care Benefit, which will provide up to \$900 bi-weekly, for up to 15 weeks. The application process for this benefit is due to become available in April. You will need to show that you meet eligibility requirements, and re-attest every 2 weeks.

<https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/corporate/notices/coronavirus.html>



I can't work because I need to care for my children due to schools and daycares being closed, do I get Employment Insurance?

If you are forced to stay home to care for children or a family member who is sick with COVID-19, you may qualify for the Emergency Care Benefit, which will provide up to \$900 bi-weekly, for up to 15 weeks. The application for the Emergency Care Benefit will be available in April 2020, and will require you to attest that you meet the eligibility requirements, and to re-attest every two weeks. To apply for the Benefit, Canadians can access it on their CRA MyAccount secure portal.

<https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/corporate/notices/coronavirus.html>

The government has also announced a one-time increase in the Child Care Benefit (CCB) of an extra \$300 per child for eligible families, to be paid in May. For more information: <https://www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/services/child-family-benefits/canada-child-benefit-overview.html>

I am a (former) international student and can't pay my student loans due to this crisis, what should I do?

The Government of Canada has announced its plan to pause the repayment of Canada Student Loans and Canada Apprenticeship Loans until September 30, 2020, with no accrual of interest. Pending parliamentary approval, these measures will become effective March 30, 2020. This would include pre-authorized debits. Effective March 30, 2020, all student loan borrowers would automatically have their repayments suspended until September 30, 2020. No payment would be required and interest will not accrue during this time. Students do not need to apply for the repayment pause.

<https://www.csnpe-nslsc.canada.ca/en/home>

I just arrived in Canada and need to apply for a Social Insurance Number, what should I do?

Service Canada is no longer accepting in-person applications for Social Insurance Numbers at this time. You may be able to apply by mail, call 1-866-274-6627 for more information.

I just arrived in Canada and am not covered by provincial healthcare yet, what coverage can I get?

In Canada healthcare is managed at a provincial level. See <https://arrivein.com/en/daily-life-in-canada/health-care-in-canada-basics-for-newcomers/>

Some provinces have a waiting period before you can get access to coverage.

During this crisis, Ontario has exceptionally waived the waiting period for any health concerns related to COVID-19: <https://news.ontario.ca/mohltc/en/2020/03/ontario-expands-coverage-for-care.html>

If you are in a province that has not waived the waiting period, and do not currently have health insurance, you will have to pay out-of-pocket for any medical fees.



Additional questions

What are some recommendations that I can do with my children while adhering to social distancing?

If you're at home with children, there's a chance that you may be running out of ideas to keep them busy. Some school boards have already started issuing online learning tools. There are also a number of free age-appropriate resources you can tap into to keep them learning while schools are closed:

- **Learn at Home.** <https://classroommagazines.scholastic.com/support/learnathome.html> has weekly-themed activities by age group.
- **Go on a field trip!** You can take a virtual tour of far-away museums: <https://artsandculture.google.com/project/streetviews>.
- **Listen to stories on Audible.** Choose from six different languages. <https://stories.audible.com/start-listen>.
- **Foster your mini-Einsteins.** You can do science experiments at home: <https://mommypoppins.com/kids/50-easy-science-experiments-for-kids-fun-educational-activities-using-household-stuff>
- **Learn to draw with an award-winning children's author:** <https://www.boredpanda.com/free-online-lunch-doodles-sessions-for-kids-mo-willems/>

You can find many other ideas in this great list: <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1Rx80vlvuASydtAkD6DLCGkZeLfrHcpZ3Q8tjTLpHdX4>

