

COVID-19 Guidance for the ALS Community - 2020/03/17

People living with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis often have a harder time with breathing and lung function. This information sheet has been put together to help you know what to do during this phase of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Prevention

- Stay home except to get medical care
- Wash your hands regularly with warm soap and water for 20-30 seconds.
- Clean all surfaces regularly that you touch every day including your phone, joystick and wheelchair armrests, tray, push rims.....
- **Keep 30 days of medical supplies and medication on hand as well as nutritional supplements (including tube feeding supplies)**
- For posters alerting visitors to your home:
<https://open.alberta.ca/publications/covid-19-information-help-prevent-the-spread-poster>

Attendant Care Issues

- **Discuss with your home care manager or agency how home health aides are screened and what back up will be provided for unwell workers**
- Call attendants/home health aides to ensure they have not travelled to an affected area or outside of Canada in the last 14 days and **that they do not have a fever, cough or breathing difficulties**
- Send attendants home who are not well.
- Ask attendants to wash their hands when they arrive and before they provide any care.
- Be sure your attendants and you wash your hands before AND after all care.
- Have a back-up plan if your attendant does not come to work or is sick.
- Read this article from public health Ontario regarding caregivers
<https://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/documents/ncov/factsheet-covid-19-guide-isolation-caregivers.pdf?la=en>

If you are sick, or wonder if you might have COVID-19

- Check the website of or call your local public health authority for advice (see attached province specific resources)
- Take the COVID self assessment
<https://myhealth.alberta.ca/Journey/COVID-19/Pages/COVID-Self-Assessment.aspx>
- Call the clinic (primary care or ALS clinic) that you usually attend before you visit to let them know if you are unwell and have other health concerns
- Isolate yourself at home if you develop fever, cough or respiratory symptoms
- Read this article from the Globe and Mail for information on symptoms
 - <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/canada/article-i-think-i-may-have-the-new-coronavirus-what-should-i-do/>

If you use a ventilator, non-invasive ventilation like BiPap, or cough assist device, check this resource www.canventottawa.ca

- **Speak to your health care provider or respiratory therapist regarding what precautions you, your family and attendants should take in your home**
- **Clean your equipment and replace filters regularly as per your device manual**
- **Ensure you have an adequate supply of filters and tubing**
- **Cough assist instructions (if using)**

<http://www.ohri.ca/nivam/documents/Cough%20Assist%20E70%20Clinician-Client%20worksheet%20Version%201.6-Eng-Uploaded%2026Oct16.pdf>

Stay Informed

Check the advice from your local provincial health authority every 24-48 hours. (see Following page for local resources)

Assess online resources and verify their accuracy. There are many claims and recommendations that are not accurate. Google and Facebook are attempting to

screen for misleading or inaccurate links and posts but rely on your local clinic, provincial information and the ALS Society in your province for the best and most up-to-date information.

Note and Disclaimer: This guidance was created by ALS experts based on a document shared by in the experts in the Spinal Cord Injury Community on March 16 2020 in consultation with infectious disease specialists. This document is based on the best available evidence at the time of release. We can't guarantee that the guidance is up to date or current as the pandemic is changing daily.

Alberta Provincial resources:

<https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/topics/Page16944.aspx>

<http://www.alberta.ca/COVID19>

<http://www.ahs.ca/covid>

General resources:

<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/awareness-resources.html>

<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/publications/diseases-conditions/vulnerable-populations-covid-19.html>

<https://www.newmobility.com/2020/03/disability-specific-recommendations-for-covid-19/>