

# Welcome to the COVID-19 Inpatient Unit (Unit 8.3)

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# Welcome to the COVID-19 Inpatient Unit (Unit 8.3)

## What is COVID-19 (SARS-CoV2)?

- COVID-19 a type of coronavirus. **Coronaviruses** are a large family of viruses that usually cause mild to moderate upper respiratory illnesses.
- Viruses always mutate (change). These changed viruses are called **variants**. There are a number of variants the Canadian government is watching closely. A variant is a concern when it affects:
  - › How the disease is spread
  - › Disease severity (how badly it affects people)
  - › How well tests used to detect (find) the virus work
  - › How well vaccines and treatments work

## How does COVID-19 (SARS-CoV2) spread?

- COVID-19 spreads from an infected person to other people through respiratory droplets or aerosols (spray). These are created when a person who is infected coughs, sneezes, sings, shouts, or talks.
- Droplets may come in direct contact with a person's mucous membranes (nose, mouth, or eyes), or they may be inhaled (breathed in) through the nose, and mouth.
- SARS-CoV2 may also spread when a person touches a surface or an object that has the virus on it, and then touches their nose, mouth, or eyes before washing their hands.
- **A person who does not have signs or symptoms of infection (also called asymptomatic or pre-symptomatic) can still spread the virus to other people.**

## What can I expect while I am admitted to the COVID-19 Inpatient Unit 8.3?

- The health care team will monitor your oxygen saturation level using a pulse oximeter. This shows us the level of oxygen (O<sub>2</sub>) in your blood. The pulse oximeter is placed on your finger.
- When you are first admitted, we will watch your vital signs (heart rate, breathing, temperature, blood pressure, etc.) often. As your symptoms get better, we may check them less often.
- Before any member of your health care team enters your room, please put on your surgical mask (given to you when you arrived at the hospital).
- **If you need to cough or sneeze while members of your health care team are in your room:**
  - › **Please cough or sneeze into your elbow or a tissue.**
- **AND**
  - › **Wash or sanitize your hands.**
- To lower the risk of being exposed to COVID-19, the health care team will only come into your room to give you care when needed. We encourage you to do as much for yourself as possible.
- A doctor will give you a physical exam when you arrive on the unit, and will check in with you each day. This check-in may happen over the phone or more often if your illness is getting worse. Check-ins will be done over the phone whenever possible.
- If you need help, press the call bell at your bedside.
- During your stay, we will take blood samples often. These samples will help the doctors treat your symptoms.
- Your health care team will encourage you to lay on your stomach (belly) if you are able to. This is called “self-proning”. See pages 3 and 4 for instructions.
- You may be asked to move as little as possible. The health care team will help you and tell you how to do this.
- After food is delivered to your room, it cannot be re-heated in the unit’s microwave. This is to keep everyone safe and lower the risk of being exposed to COVID-19.

Because of the high number of cases within Nova Scotia, it is possible that you could be transferred to another hospital. This allows us to free up bed space for another patient. Your doctor will decide if a transfer is safe for you.

## **Personal belongings**

To lower the spread of COVID-19, patients are not allowed to bring any personal belongings into the hospital when they are admitted, unless they have talked about it with the health care team.

## **Visitor restrictions**

- **To lower the spread of COVID-19, patients admitted to the COVID-19 Inpatient Unit are not allowed to have visitors.**
  - › We have iPads® you can use to FaceTime® your loved ones. Please ask a member of your health care team if you would like to use an iPad.
  - › You may also use your own personal device to contact your loved ones.

## **Self-proning: Instructions for patients and caregivers**

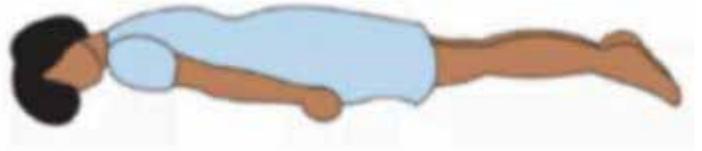
- Lying on your stomach and in different positions will help your body to get air into all areas of your lungs. You may want to use pillows when lying on your side.
- **We recommend trying to change your position every 30 minutes to 2 hours.**

**Sitting up is better than lying on your back. If you are able, please try:**

1. 30 minutes up to 2 hours: lying on your belly
2. 30 minutes up to 2 hours: lying on your right side
3. 30 minutes up to 2 hours: sitting up either in bed or in a chair
4. 30 minutes up to 2 hours: lying on your left side
5. Repeat steps 1 to 4.

**And repeat...**

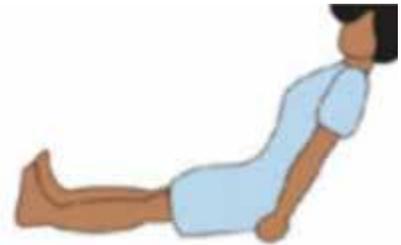
1. 30 minutes to 2 hours: lying on your belly



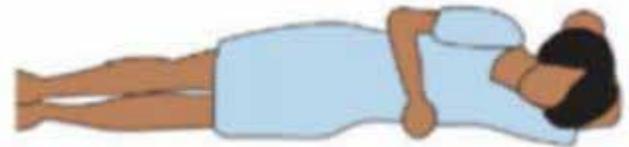
2. 30 minutes to 2 hours: lying on your right side



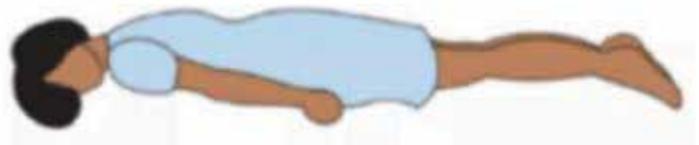
3. 30 minutes to 2 hours: sitting up



4. 30 minutes to 2 hours: lying on your left side



5. Then go back to position #1: lying on your belly



**Switch between side-lying positions (right and left) and consider adding pillows for support:**

- › Lie on one side. Use pillows to support your legs, hips, back, and chest (instead of steps 2 or 4).
- › Lie on one side. Use pillows to slightly support to your leg, hip, neck, and arm (instead of completely doing step 1).



## What should I eat and drink as I recover from COVID-19?

- Getting enough food and liquids is important as you recover from COVID-19. Losing weight when you are sick can make you lose muscle and fluids.
- COVID-19 can also cause you to lose your sense of smell and taste. Try to follow the guidelines below even if you do not feel like eating or drinking.

### Liquids

- Drink plenty of liquids to help make your lung secretions (mucus) thin. This will make it easier to clear your lungs when you cough.
- Choose smoothies, milkshakes, soups, popsicles, or oral (by mouth) liquid supplements (also known as meal replacements). **If you are only drinking and not eating solid food, make sure you are drinking enough.**
- **Drink at least 60 ml (2 ounces) to 120 ml (4 ounces) of liquid every 15 minutes.** Take small sips of liquids every few minutes if you cannot drink large amounts at one time. Keep liquids by your bedside day and night.
- Drink liquids other than water, as they can give you more calories and protein. Examples include:
  - › Juice
  - › Cow's milk
  - › Soy milk
  - › Almond milk
  - › Smoothies
  - › Milkshakes
  - › Ensure<sup>®</sup>, Boost<sup>®</sup>, or other store brand liquid supplement
- Most people will need 5 to 6 bottles of oral liquid supplements each day to meet their needs, plus an extra 2 bottles a day to meet their recovery needs.
- If you find the oral liquid supplements too sweet, add a pinch of salt to the bottle. You can also try it mixed with milk over ice, or frozen in a cup and eaten like ice cream.
- Limit liquids with caffeine (like coffee, tea, dark pop).
- Dehydration (not having enough fluids) can happen if you do not drink enough. Signs of dehydration include:
  - › Thirst
  - › Headache
  - › Feeling tired
  - › Constipation (not able to poop)
  - › Making less urine (pee)
  - › Urinating (peeing) less each day
  - › Dark yellow urine (urine should be pale yellow)
  - › Dry mouth
  - › Dizziness
  - › Feeling cranky or grumpy
  - › Cracked lips

## Food

- As you recover, eat foods with extra protein and take in more calories for at least 4 weeks (1 month).
- Your body needs an extra 400 to 500 calories and an extra 30 grams of protein each day.
- Try to eat 6 times a day, every 2 to 3 hours. Eat even if you are not hungry. Eat snacks between meals.
- Eat the high protein, higher calorie parts of your meal first (like meat, fish, poultry, eggs, beans, and/or nuts). Eat the lower calorie parts of your meal last (like salad, vegetables, or fruit).
- Eat what you can first, then try to drink an oral liquid supplement (like Boost® or Ensure®) after your meal.
- Weigh yourself at least 2 times a week to make sure you are not losing more than 2 pounds (lbs) a week. If you are losing weight, see the pamphlet, “*High Energy, High Protein Guidelines*” for tips and recipes:
  - › [www.nshealth.ca/sites/nshealth.ca/files/patientinformation/0564.pdf](http://www.nshealth.ca/sites/nshealth.ca/files/patientinformation/0564.pdf)
- You will be given an Ensure® Club application. When you sign up, you will be sent coupons you can use to buy Ensure® products.

## Nutrition and Food Services for patients with COVID-19

- Please call the Dietetic Technician as soon as possible after you are admitted for Nutrition Risk Screening:
  - › Ashley (Unit 8.3) - Dietetic Technician
  - › Phone: 902-233-4909
  - › Kirsten (Unit 8.4) - Dietetic Technician
  - › Phone: 902-476-6396
- If there is no answer, leave a detailed message with the best number to reach you at, and your call will be returned.
- You may also call for:
  - › Help with menu choices and/or issues
  - › Snacks and extras
  - › Allergies and/or intolerances
  - › Nutrition questions and/or concerns

## For more information on recovery:

Take a photo of the QR code below using your smart phone or visit:

- › [www.MyCOVIDRecoveryNS.ca](http://www.MyCOVIDRecoveryNS.ca)



## My COVID Recovery: 3 Month Post-COVID Symptoms Survey

The purpose of this survey is to learn more about your recovery at least 3 months after your COVID-19 infection. We will use the information you share in the survey to help connect you to supports to manage your symptoms.

To complete the survey, take a photo of the QR code below using your smart phone or visit:

- › <https://quality-improvement.nshealth.ca/surveys/?s=3CPJKFAPLP>





