

COVID-19 Symptom Timeline: Why Days 5 to 10 Are So Important When You Have Coronavirus

Tracking your daily symptoms can help you and your doctors make better decisions about whether a hospital visit is needed.

- To monitor COVID-19, it is important to mark your calendar at the first sign of illness, and regularly track your fever and oxygen levels.
- **Day 5-10** of COVID-19 are often the most worrisome time for respiratory complications, particularly for older patients and those with underlying conditions like high blood pressure, obesity or diabetes.
- The best way to monitor your health during this time is to use a **pulse oximeter**. It is a small device that clips on your finger and measures your blood oxygen levels.
 - ** Normal oxygen saturation range is about 96 to 99 percent. Call your doctor if your blood oxygen reading drops to 92 percent or less
- While at home, you can increase the flow of oxygen to your lungs by not resting on your back, as outlined in the proning resource available on the gbfht.ca website, or in your patient package if applicable
- Resting on your stomach can open parts of the lungs that are compressed when lying on your back. You can also change to resting on your left side or right side, or sit upright in a chair.

Timeline of COVID-19 Symptoms:

Note: symptoms can appear at any time – always consult with a doctor or nurse practitioner for guidance about your specific case if needed

Days 1-3

- Early symptoms of COVID-19 vary widely. It can start with a tickle in your throat, a cough, fever, headache and feeling winded or just a little pressure in your chest
- Sometimes it begins with a bout of diarrhea
- Some people just feel tired and lose their sense of taste and smell
- Many people have several symptoms but no fever
- Some patients with gastrointestinal symptoms go on to develop respiratory symptoms, while others don't

Days 4-6

- Some patients never develop more than mild symptoms, or none at all
- Others begin to feel terrible, with an ever-present fever, aches, chills, cough and an inability to get comfortable
- Some younger patients with mild disease may develop rashes, including itchy red patches, swelling or blistering on the toes or fingers, similar to frostbite

Days 7-8

- For patients with mild illness, the worst is over after a week
- Patients who have felt terrible may get worse. And some patients might start to feel better briefly then take a turn for the worse
- *Patients should monitor their oxygen levels and **check in with a doctor if they start to feel unwell**

Days 8-12

- Monitoring should continue for the second week of illness. Patients may feel better sleeping on their stomachs or sides
- Monitor for worsening symptoms including increasing shortness of breath, worsening cough
- Your home oxygen monitoring monitor can signal if you need additional medical attention

Days 13-14

- Patients who had mild illness should be well recovered
- Patients who had worse symptoms, but maintained normal oxygen levels, should feel mostly recovered after two weeks, although many patients report lingering fatigue and other issues
- Doctors advise a slow return to activity, even if you had mild or moderate illness
- Patients with severe symptoms and those who needed additional treatment because of low oxygen may still feel unwell and fatigued and take far longer to recover

Do not hesitate to seek medical attention if you feel that your condition is worsening!