



First Nations Health Authority
Health through wellness

Let's Talk About Hospital Treatment Options During the COVID-19 Pandemic

This information can help you get informed and plan ahead if you ever become seriously ill from COVID-19

WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT PEOPLE WHO GET SICK WITH COVID-19

- Most people with COVID-19 recover on their own while self-isolating at home
- Older adults and people with a few medical conditions are more likely to become seriously ill with COVID-19 and have a higher risk of dying
- There is currently no cure for COVID-19; the goal of treatment is to give the body the chance to fight the virus by building the immune system
- A small number of people become sick enough to need care in a hospital
- A few become very seriously ill and go to an intensive care unit (ICU)

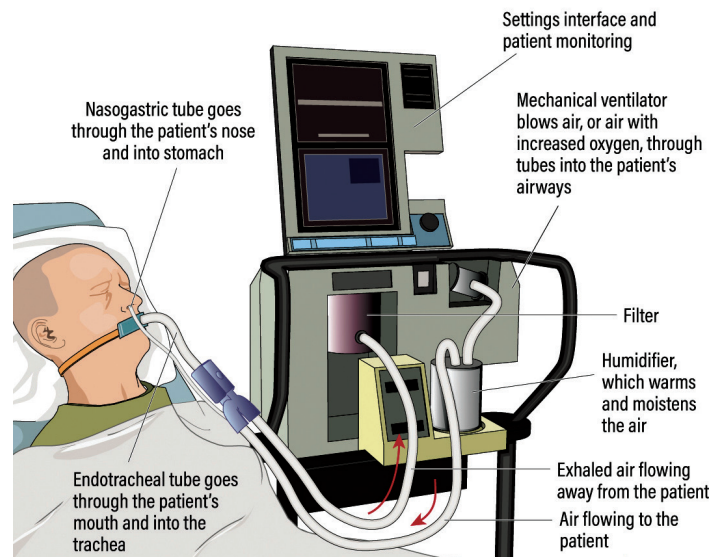
WHY ARE PEOPLE SERIOUSLY ILL WITH COVID-19 TREATED WITH A BREATHING MACHINE (VENTILATOR)?

- People seriously ill with COVID-19 find it difficult to breathe on their own
- The ventilator might keep the person alive long enough for the body to fight the disease

HOW DOES A VENTILATOR WORK? (SEE ABOVE RIGHT)

- A ventilator pushes air through a tube directly into a person's lungs
- The tube is inserted down the throat so the person cannot talk
- People on a ventilator are given strong medicine to make them stay asleep. This is because it is painful and scary to be on a ventilator. The sleep while on a ventilator is also called an induced coma.

(Image taken from the Royal College of Nursing)

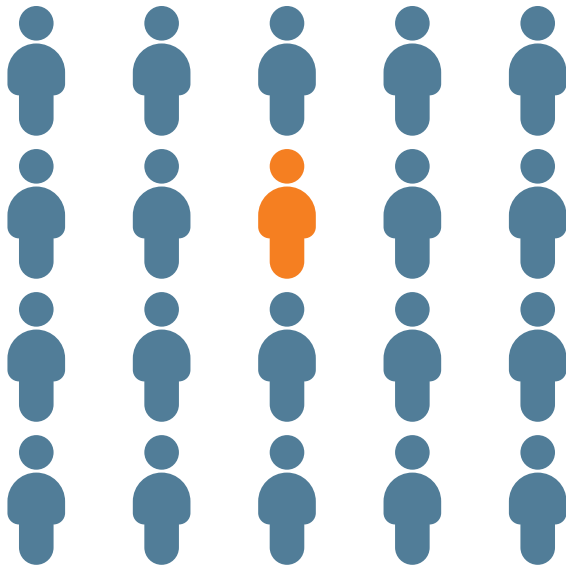


HOW WELL DOES A BREATHING MACHINE (VENTILATOR) WORK?

- Most people sick with COVID-19 who are put on a ventilator do not live
- Those who survive may never return to their previous health
- The longer people are on a ventilator, the more likely they will need help with everyday living after the ventilator is removed

WHAT IS CARDIOPULMONARY RESUSCITATION (CPR)?

- CPR is used in an emergency if the person stops breathing or the heart stops beating. It works by:
 - Pressing on the chest to pump blood to the heart
 - Forcing air into the lungs to get oxygen to the brain
 - Giving medicines to try to re-start the heart
 - Electrical shock (defibrillation) from a machine to try to re-start the heart



HOW WELL DOES CPR WORK?

- If the heart stops for more than 5 minutes, there is a good chance of brain damage or death
- In non COVID-19 situations, only 1 out of 20 people will recover and return home (see above). For people with COVID-19, there is less chance of getting better after CPR.
- Even if the heart is re-started, CPR will not improve COVID-19 or any other medical condition
- People who survive CPR often need a ventilator afterwards

WHO IS MOST LIKELY TO BE HELPED BY A VENTILATOR OR CPR?

- Younger people and people who were healthy before
- Those who only need a ventilator for a short time (days or a week or two)

WHO IS LESS LIKELY TO BE HELPED BY A VENTILATOR OR CPR?

- Those people who have diabetes, heart, lung, liver, or kidney conditions
- Those who have a serious illness, such as cancer or dementia
- Older people
- Those with a poor immune system

WHAT ARE POSSIBLE ISSUES AFTER GETTING BETTER WITH THE HELP OF CPR, A VENTILATOR AND BEING IN ICU?

- Trouble performing simple tasks such as cooking, cleaning, making phone calls
- Broken ribs
- Injury to the brain, throat, voice, lungs, and kidneys

WHAT ARE POSSIBLE CONCERNS ABOUT GOING TO THE HOSPITAL?

- Hospitals with ICU are only in large cities, which could mean travelling a distance from home
- During the COVID-19 pandemic, hospitals have limits to the number of visitors

WHAT IF I DON'T GO TO THE HOSPITAL?

- Have a family meeting to be sure there are enough healthy people to take care of you
- Include your Health Director/ other community health people in your plans.
- Usually a community nurse will also be involved with your care; this may include nurses from the health authority.
- Everyone will work together to try to meet your goal of staying home.

WHAT SHOULD I BE DOING NOW?

- **Protect yourself** from getting COVID-19: keep a physical distance of 2 metres, wash hands often, keep hands away from face, stay away from others who are sick
- **Protect others:** cough or sneeze into your elbow, stay home when you are sick:
Wear a mask if you cannot physical distance
OR
Follow public health advice about wearing masks
- **Start planning** for your care now, because your health can change quickly if you get COVID-19
- **Think** about how you want to be cared for and what is important to you
- **Think** if you want to go the hospital, which could be far from your community
- **Decide** who would speak for you if you were too sick to speak for yourself (Substitute Decision Maker)
- **Talk** to your family and health care providers about how you would want to receive care
- **Record** your wishes, if you like. For more information [Your Care, Your Choices](#)

REMEMBER:

Whatever options you choose, you can change your mind at any time. Your health care team will work with you, and do their best to make you comfortable.

It is strong and your right to seek answers to your questions.

Contact your health care team for more information.