

# COVID-19:

## WASH YOUR HANDS OF GERMS, RACISM, AND XENOPHOBIA!

The World Health Organization has declared COVID-19 a pandemic. It is transmitted in much the same way as the [flu](#).

This fact sheet outlines short-term and long-term actions to avoid the harm that the virus can bring to your health and to the people in your communities.

### CREATING HEALTHY AND SAFE WORKPLACES

#### Things you can do include:

- + Wash your hands often with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- + Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- + Avoid close contact with people who are ill.
- + Stay home when you are ill.
- + Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then immediately throw the tissue in the garbage and wash your hands.
- + Sneeze or cough into your sleeve or arm, if you don't have a tissue.
- + Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.
- + Bargain extra break time to allow for hand washing and cleaning into your collective agreement, if you have one.
- + Advocate that employers implement anti-discrimination protocols.
- + Refuse any work you believe to be unsafe, as per the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*.

*Please note: Surgical masks are not the same as respirators.<sup>1</sup> Surgical masks will not completely prevent others from being exposed to the illness, but if you are sick you can wear one at home to reduce the chance of passing the illness to others.*

### For more information on COVID-19:

[www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019](http://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019)

[www.publichealthontario.ca/en/diseases-and-conditions/infectious-diseases/respiratory-diseases/novel-coronavirus/articles](http://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/diseases-and-conditions/infectious-diseases/respiratory-diseases/novel-coronavirus/articles)

<sup>1</sup> A special note for front line workers including health care workers: N-95 respirators are the minimum standard to protect health care workers from airborne droplets and must be properly fitted to the face of each worker.

### CREATING HEALTHY AND SAFE COMMUNITIES

#### Demand the following from all levels of government:

- + Provide 7 permanent paid sick days for all workers, and 14 paid sick days during a crisis.
- + Provide 10 days of job-protected personal emergency leave for all workers.
- + Eliminate sick note requirements for all workers.
- + Ensure full workers' compensation to any worker who interacts with the public and that contracts health conditions related to Coronavirus/COVID-19.
- + Increase hospital funding by at least 5.3 per cent each year.
- + Ensure access to clean water for all Indigenous communities.
- + Provide access to Employment Insurance (EI) for all workers.
- + Create an emergency fund for workers currently without access to EI.
- + Establish a job-protected right to take EI.
- + Fund the Anti-Racism Directorate to end xenophobia and racism.

As you focus on illness prevention at home and in your workplace, always avoid linking COVID-19 with any racialized group. Intervene if you see or hear anyone doing so. You can find information on being an anti-racist ally in the OFL info sheet [Standing Against Hate](#). To read more about confronting racism during the COVID-19