



First Nations Health Authority
Health through wellness

FNHA Advises Communities to Prepare for Possible Spread of Coronavirus

Important Steps for Communities to Take

British Columbia's health system has a detailed plan in place should the coronavirus known as COVID-19 spread across the province.

Bearing that in mind, please approach these preparations with calm in our hearts and trust in each other to avoid causing unnecessary anxiety in our communities.

However, there are a number of steps First Nations communities can take now to prepare for the possibility the virus spreads more widely:

- Review your existing Communicable Disease Emergency Plan (Pandemic Plan) and update it as needed. Make sure all of the contact information is correct and that people are aware of what is expected of them.
- Review the community's supply of essentials.
- Where there is one, check to see if the community health centre or nursing stations requires additional support to prepare for possible coronavirus patients.
- Train and prepare staff to cover for each other as people may need time off to care for their families or for themselves.
- Continue to follow the First Nations Health Authority communications channels for timely and reliable information on the outbreak.
- Involve the whole community in efforts to prevent the spread of the virus by sharing tips on how to prevent its spread, as well as how to recognize the symptoms in each other.

Coronaviruses like COVID-19 spread through human contact, and one of the most effective ways to curb its spread is by washing your hands. Hand sanitizer is just as effective at killing bacteria and viruses, and it's easier to use when you're out and about. Here's how you can make your own hand sanitizer at home.

Products used in this guide

- Kill the viruses: [MG Chemicals 99.9% Isopropyl Alcohol](#) (\$17 at Amazon)
- Protect your skin: [KPI Healthcare Aloe Vera Gel](#) (\$11 at Amazon)
- Make it fragrant: [Esslux Essential Oils Set](#) (\$9 at Amazon)

How to make your own hand sanitizer: What you need to know

A hand sanitizer is your best defense against viruses when you're out running errands and can't get to a sink to wash your hands. According to the [CDC](#), the best way to stay protected is to wash your hands for 20 seconds after returning from a public place. As a general rule, you should avoid touching your nose, eyes, or mouth with unwashed hands.

If you're already using a hand sanitizer, make sure it has at least 60% alcohol. There are some hand sanitizers that are alcohol-free, and these won't be as effective in killing bacteria and viruses. The correct way of using a hand sanitizer is to apply it liberally to your hands and rub them together until the gel effervesces. Demand for hand sanitizers has shot through the roof in the wake of the coronavirus, and if you're running low, you can easily make some at home.

How to make your own hand sanitizer: List of ingredients

A hand sanitizer consists of a pretty basic formula, and it's easy to [make your own at home](#) if your local pharmacy or retailer is running low. These are the ingredients you'll need:

- [2/3 cup 99.9% isopropyl alcohol](#). You can find isopropyl alcohol at any drugstore or pharmacy if it's out of stock at Amazon. A one-quart bottle should be available for around \$15, and you'll be able to make a lot of hand sanitizer with that. If you like being on the safe side, you can also [pick up a six-quart pack](#).
- [1/3 cup 98% aloe vera gel](#). You need to mix the isopropyl alcohol with something, because on its own it will burn your hands. The ideal solution is aloe vera gel as it acts as a natural moisturizer.
- [8 - 10 drops of essential oils](#). If you need to add some fragrance to the mix, pick up a pack of essential oils. This isn't needed, but most pocket hand sanitizers these days have some fragrance, and if you're used to the smell, it doesn't cost much to pick up a few essential oils.
- [Bowl and spoon to mix it all together](#).
- [A basic funnel](#) to get your hand sanitizer into a bottle.
- [Plastic travel bottles](#) for storing the hand sanitizer. Once you get your hand sanitizer ready, you'll need bottles to carry it in. You can get a [six-pack of 2oz bottles for \\$7](#), and

they come with a flip top that makes it easy to squeeze out the hand sanitizer. If you're making hand sanitizer for home use, you can get a six-pack of 8oz bottles for just \$9.

- Nitrile gloves so you don't burn your hands when making the hand sanitizer.

How to make the most effective hand sanitizer at home

Before you start making your own hand sanitizer at home, there is a very important point to note. Isopropyl alcohol is highly flammable and will burn your skin should it come into direct contact with your hands. I recommend using nitrile gloves as a general precaution. Once you're ready to get started, here's what you need to do:

1. Pour the isopropyl alcohol and aloe vera gel into the bowl. As hand sanitizers need to contain at least 60% alcohol to be effective, you should ideally maintain a 2:1 ratio of isopropyl alcohol to aloe vera gel. For every 2oz of isopropyl alcohol you add, you should mix 2oz of aloe vera gel.
2. Add essential oils to the mix if needed. You don't necessarily need essential oils, but if you like a particular smell, you can add a few drops of oil.
3. Stir the ingredients together with a spoon and pour them into plastic bottles using a funnel. Your hand sanitizer is ready to go.