



## COVID-19 Response Hand Hygiene and the Use of Hand Sanitizers

### 1) How can I keep myself safe and limit the spread of infection?

We all have a role to play to prevent the spread of germs within our communities: to protect ourselves, our families, and those at higher risk.

Together, we can take the following steps to slow the spread of COVID-19 by making a conscious effort to keep a physical distance between each other:

- avoid crowded places
- avoid non-essential community and cultural gatherings
- avoid handshakes
- keep a distance of at least 2 arms lengths (approximately 2 meters) from others, as much as possible
- limit contact with people at higher risk (for example older adults and those with other health conditions)

In addition to social distancing:

- Proper hygiene can help reduce the risk of infection or spreading infection to others.
  - wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after using the washroom and when preparing food
  - use alcohol-based hand sanitizers if soap and water are not available.
- When coughing or sneezing:
  - cough or sneeze into a tissue or the bend of your arm, not your hand
  - dispose of any tissues you have used as soon as possible in a lined waste basket and wash your hands afterwards
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands

### 2) Hand sanitizer is not available in my community. Can community members make their own?

ISC understands that some Indigenous communities are being approached by external parties to start up hand sanitizer distilleries. We caution everyone that there are regulations and processes for this to happen.

With respect to individuals making their own hand sanitizer – we do understand that there is a lot of information on social media etc. about “recipes” on how to make your own. Again any product that is home made runs the risk of not being sufficient to protect against COVID-19.

Furthermore, there have been reports that some communities are hearing of individuals who do not have access to rubbing alcohol, are instead using alcohol intended for consumption. This should never be done.



### **3) Companies are interested in making hand sanitizer in our community. Or, we are interested in producing hand sanitizer in our community. How do we make sure the product meets the appropriate standards and is licensed?**

Federal regulations require a Site License in order to manufacture, package, or label an ethanol-based hand sanitizer, and a Product Licence in order to sell the product in Canada. In light of the unprecedented demand and urgent need for products that can help limit the spread of COVID-19, Health Canada is facilitating access to products, including hand sanitizers, which may not fully meet current regulatory requirements. More information can be found here.

<https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/drugs-health-products/disinfectants/covid-19/information-manufacturers.html>

A step-by-step guide is available to walk you through the process.

<https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/drugs-health-products/drug-products/applications-submissions/guidance-documents/covid-19-expedited-licensing-alcohol-hand-sanitizer.html>

For more information on site licenses and product applications, please contact Health Canada at: [hc.nnhpd-dpsnso.sc@canada.ca](mailto:hc.nnhpd-dpsnso.sc@canada.ca)

### **4) How can I make sure that hand sanitizer is from a licensed producer?**

Commercially produced hand sanitizers with an 8 digit Drug Identification Number (DIN) or Natural Product Number (NPN) are known to meet federal requirements for safety, effectiveness and quality.

To find out which antiseptic skin cleansers or hand sanitizers meet Health Canada's requirements:

1. Locate the 8-digit NPN or DIN on the product label.
2. Look for that number on the hand sanitizers list here: <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/drugs-health-products/disinfectants/covid-19/hand-sanitizer.html>

Note: This list is updated regularly, so please check back often.