REMINDER: Self-isolation Timing for Close Contacts of Confirmed COVID-19 Cases

Update to York Region health care providers as of October 26, 2020

With recent changes to the Ministry of Health's [COVID-19 Quick Reference Public Health Guidance on Testing and Clearance](#), this communication will help clarify the clearance guidance for close contacts of confirmed COVID-19 cases.

> Close contacts of confirmed cases of COVID-19 must self-isolate for 14 days from the date of last exposure to the case. Close contacts must remain in self-isolation for the full 14 days, regardless of test results.

This is due to the incubation period of COVID-19, which can develop up to 14 days after exposure. COVID-19 testing is accurate for the point in time that the specimen is collected. The disease will not be detected until it has fully incubated, which means that an individual can test negative within their 14-day isolation and still develop a COVID-19 infection days later.

For those with a confirmed case of COVID-19, clearance is now 10 days from symptom onset (or from specimen collection if persistently asymptomatic) for those with mild or moderate illness, and 20 days from symptom onset for those with severe illness (i.e., ICU level of care) or severe immune compromise. Clearance of a case is dependent on the individual being afebrile without fever-reducing medications and symptoms are improving for at least 24 hours.

This recent change for clearance (from 14 days to 10) represents the current understanding of the virus's duration, which can be less than its incubation period.

For complete details on COVID-19 testing and clearance, consult the [COVID-19 Quick Reference Public Health Guidance on Testing and Clearance](#), updated on October 1, 2020.

For information to share with your clients and patients, please see York Region Public Health's [How to Self-Isolate](#) and [What is a Close Contact?](#) documents.

Contact York Region Public Health

If you have any questions, call our dedicated health professional COVID-19 line at 1-877-464-9675 ext. 77280 (8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., seven days a week, after hours call 905-953-6478). Continue to visit [york.ca/healthprofessionals](#), [york.ca/covid19](#) and [Ontario.ca/covid19](#) for up to date information on COVID-19.

York Region