

Updates to COVID-19 Case Definition, Symptoms and Testing Guidance Issued by Ministry of Health

Update to York Region health care providers as of August 12, 2020

In addition to the recent update to the [Quick Reference Public Health Guidance on Testing and Clearance](#), on August 6, 2020 Ontario's Ministry of Health has updated three additional COVID-19 documents:

1. [COVID-19 Case Definition](#) with new information on cases confirmed through serology testing
2. [COVID-19 Reference Document for Symptoms](#) with an updated section on Multisystem Inflammatory Syndrome in Children (MIS-C)
3. [COVID-19 Provincial Testing Guidance](#) with new information on serology testing, and updated guidance on asymptomatic individuals and targeted asymptomatic testing campaigns

COVID-19 Case Definition

The case definition has been updated to include confirmation through serology testing. The definition of a **confirmed case** now includes:

- A person with laboratory confirmation of SARS-CoV-2 infection **OR**
- A person with a positive detection of serum/plasma immunoglobulin G (IgG) antibodies to SARS-CoV-2 from a laboratory in Ontario that is licensed to conduct serology testing for clinical purposes.

Licensed serology testing should currently only be used for [limited purposes](#). COVID-19 IgG testing should not be used as an acute screening or diagnostic tool or used to determine a patient's immune status or infectivity.

COVID-19 Reference Document for Symptoms

The reference document for symptoms has been updated to include additional details on MIS-C. Information on MIS-C and its temporal association with COVID-19 is still emerging. As such, information on symptoms associated with MIS-C may evolve over time. Please see the [World Health Organization Case Definition](#) or the [Canadian Paediatric Surveillance Program](#) case definition for diagnostic criteria. Symptoms associated with MIS-C may include:

- Persistent fever
- Conjunctivitis
- Gastrointestinal symptoms, such as nausea/vomiting, diarrhea, and abdominal pain
- Rash

COVID-19 Provincial Testing Guidance

This guidance has been updated to include specific clinical indications for serologic testing, updated guidance on asymptomatic contacts of confirmed cases, and the addition of testing guidance for schools as a priority population.

Guidance for asymptomatic individual contacts of confirmed positive cases:

Asymptomatic contacts of a confirmed case should be considered for testing within 14 days from their last exposure.

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- Contacts who have had ongoing exposure to the case while they have been infectious, or who had similar acquisition exposures as the case, should be tested as soon as possible
- Contacts part of an outbreak investigation should be tested as soon as possible
- Contacts who were only exposed to the case and who do not share acquisition exposures should be tested at least 5 to 7 days after their exposure to the case (median incubation period). Testing at day 10 to 14 is more likely to yield whether the contact has become an asymptomatic case.

If the test result is negative, asymptomatic contacts must remain in self-isolation for 14 days from their last exposure to the case. If an asymptomatic contact tests negative and then subsequently becomes symptomatic, they should be re-tested.

Routine testing of asymptomatic individuals in the absence of an exposure to a confirmed case should NOT be performed, unless otherwise directed by public health.

Testing guidance for schools (K-12, post-secondary):

Definition: Workers not covered in previous guidance, including teacher, support, administration, and environmental or facility services staff, as well as students in schools.

Testing Guidance: Symptomatic testing of these groups should be conducted in alignment with the guidance for all symptomatic individuals. Testing of asymptomatic contacts of cases or in outbreaks will be considered in consultation with York Region Public Health and in accordance with public health unit guidance on school outbreak management (forthcoming from the Ministry of Health).

For more information

For access to the complete guidance documents, please visit the [Ministry of Health's COVID-19 Guidance for the Health Sector web page](#).

York Region Public Health will continue to provide health care professionals with the latest information on Ministry guidance as the COVID-19 pandemic progresses. If you have questions about COVID-19, call our dedicated health professional COVID-19 line at **1-877-464-9675 ext. 77280** (8:30 a.m. to 6 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.