

# **Updated COVID-19 Case Definition, New Directives and Additional Guidance for Health Care Workers Returning from Self-Isolation**

## **Update to York Region health care providers as of April 1, 2020**

On March 30, 2020, the Ministry of Health updated the COVID-19 case definition, issued a number of directives and provided additional guidance for health care workers returning from self-isolation.

### **Case Definition Updates**

The current probable and confirmed case definition has been updated. The updated case definition is included on our website, [york.ca/healthprofessionals](http://york.ca/healthprofessionals) on our COVID-19 specific page.

**As a reminder, by law, confirmed and probable cases of COVID-19 must be reported to York Region Public Health.** This includes individuals who are being tested for COVID-19.

Call York Region Public Health immediately at:

- 1-877-464-9675 ext. 77280 on Monday to Friday: 8:30 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. **OR**
- 905-953-6478 after hours

### **Advice on testing**

Please note that it is important to ask individuals you are assessing for COVID-19 if they work, volunteer or otherwise attend high risk settings. These include:

- Any health care setting (e.g., hospital, any type of clinic (medical, dental, naturopathic, etc.), long-term care home, retirement home), even if they are working in an administrative capacity and aren't providing direct care
- Any group home or other institution like a shelter, prison, or child care facility
- If they are a first responder

If they do, testing is strongly recommended and their high risk setting (or occupation) should be indicated clearly on the laboratory requisition.

### **Advice on self-isolation for your patients**

Please remember that if you have tested someone for COVID-19, in addition to reporting this to Public Health, it is critical to tell these individuals that they and their household members need to self-isolate until their results are communicated to them by Public Health.

### **Chief Medical Officer of Health Directives**

Ontario's Chief Medical Officer of Health issued four new directives on March 30, 2020. Directives were issued for:

- Health care providers
- Hospitals
- Long-Term Care Homes

These directives will be posted on [york.ca/healthprofessionals](http://york.ca/healthprofessionals) on our COVID-19 specific page.



For **health care providers**, the new directive replaces the previous directive issued March 12, 2020 and now states:

- A point-of-care risk assessment (PCRA) must be performed by every health care worker before every patient interaction
- At a minimum, contact and droplet precautions must be used by workers for all interactions with suspected, presumed or confirmed COVID-19 patients. Contact and droplet precautions includes gloves, face shields or goggles, gowns and surgical/procedure masks, and
- Airborne precautions when aerosol generating medical procedures (AGMPs) are planned or anticipated to be performed on patients with suspected or confirmed COVID-19, based on a point of care risk assessment and clinical and professional judgement.
- Clinicians working in outpatient settings are encouraged to put into place virtual methods for assessing their clients wherever possible

### **Additional Guidance on Health Care Workers and return to work**

**Please note that any health care workers or individuals that work in high risk settings (as above) should not return to work if they are unwell and showing any symptoms of illness (this can include but is not limited to: fever, cough, shortness of breath, gastrointestinal symptoms, sore throat, runny nose).**

Health care workers showing any symptoms should be tested for COVID-19.

The Ministry of Health has provided guidance for health care workers when it comes to returning to work after symptoms. Please see table below:

<b>Symptoms</b>	<b>Test Result</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>
Yes	Positive	Return to work 24 hours after symptom resolution; <b>AND</b> Continue with appropriate PPE at work until 2 negative tests (if no longer doing clearance swabs, continue until 14 days after symptoms); <b>AND</b> Continue with <a href="#">work-self-isolation</a> for 14 days after symptom onset
Yes	Negative	Return to work 24 hours after symptom resolution
Yes	Not tested	Return to work at 14 days after symptom onset; <b>OR</b> Return to work 24 hours after symptom resolution with appropriate PPE and work-self-isolation until 14 days from symptom onset <i>NOTE: This category should be unusual as it is very important that anyone working or attending a health care setting is tested.</i>
No	Positive	Return to work immediately; <b>AND</b> Continue with appropriate PPE at work until 2 negative tests (if no longer doing clearance swabs, continue until 14 days after positive test result); <b>AND</b> Continue with work-self-isolation for 14 days after test result

## Reminder: Travel and Return to Work

Health care workers who have traveled outside of Canada within the last 14 days should self-isolate for 14 days, starting from their arrival in Ontario. Health care workers should not attend work if they are sick.

- Workers that are deemed critical to operations, by all parties, and are asymptomatic should:
  - Undergo regular screening
  - Use appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for 14 days
  - Undertake active self-monitoring, including taking their temperature twice daily to monitor for fever
  - Immediately self-isolate if symptoms develop and self-identify to their organization's Occupational Health and Safety department.

## Options and decision-making at end of life

Consider reminding patients and their families about the importance of discussing end-of-life care options and decisions, even when individuals are well. While this can be a difficult discussion to have, making these decisions in advance can ensure that the individual's wishes are carried out appropriately. For more information, visit this resource from the Public Health Agency of Canada:

<https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/options-decision-making-end-life.html>

## Resources for you and your patients

Public Health of Ontario – How to self-isolate while working

<https://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/documents/ncov/ipac/ipac-covid-19-work-self-isolation.pdf?la=en>

Ministry of Health – COVID-19 Fact Sheet: Talking to Children About the Pandemic

[http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/publichealth/coronavirus/docs/2019\\_talking\\_children\\_guidance.pdf](http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/publichealth/coronavirus/docs/2019_talking_children_guidance.pdf)

Ministry of Health – COVID-19 Fact Sheet: Resources for Ontarians Experiencing Mental Health and Addictions Issues During the Pandemic

[http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/publichealth/coronavirus/docs/resources\\_ontarians\\_experiencing\\_mha.pdf](http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/publichealth/coronavirus/docs/resources_ontarians_experiencing_mha.pdf)

CAMH – Mental Health and the COVID-19 Pandemic

<https://www.camh.ca/en/health-info/mental-health-and-covid-19>

## For more information

Health professionals that are diagnosed clinically or with laboratory confirmation of COVID-19 can call York Region Public Health for advice on return to work plans. Call our dedicated health professional COVID-19 line at **1-877-464-9675 ext. 77280** (8 a.m. to 8 p.m., seven days a week, after hours call **905-953-6478**). Continue to visit [york.ca/healthprofessionals](http://york.ca/healthprofessionals), [york.ca/covid19](http://york.ca/covid19) and [Ontario.ca/coronavirus](http://Ontario.ca/coronavirus) for up to date information on COVID-19.