

COVID-19 Public Health Management of Confirmed and Probable Cases

COVID-19 update to York Region health care providers and COVID-19 Assessment Centres

March 26, 2020

On March 25, 2020, the Ministry of Health released new guidance documents on the Public Health Management of COVID-19 Cases and Contacts in Ontario.

Case Definition Updates

The case definition has been updated to no longer include a 'person under investigation' definition (PUI). Only Probable and Confirmed cases are reportable to York Region Public Health.

Symptoms of COVID-19 can include: fever, cough, shortness of breath/difficulty breathing. Other potential symptoms may include: muscle aches, fatigue, headache, sore throat, runny nose. Symptoms in young children may also be non-specific, such as lethargy, poor feeding.

Probable COVID-19 cases are individuals with symptoms AND:

- travel outside of Canada OR
- close contact with a confirmed or probable case OR
- close contact with a person with acute respiratory illness and for whom laboratory specimen is not available (e.g., patient refused), inconclusive, or negative (if specimen quality or timing is suspect).

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 as well as those clinically diagnosed with COVID-19 meeting case definition, but not tested.

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 (before 8:30 a.m. and after 8:00 p.m. Monday to Friday and 24 hours per day on weekends/holidays).

Management of Persons Being Tested for COVID-19

Health care providers who identify individuals at risk of COVID-19 and who meet testing criteria for COVID-19 should inform the individual to self-isolate while test results are pending (if the individual does not require hospital care). Self-isolation information is available on our website, york.ca/covid19.

Health care providers should report the individual being tested for COVID-19 to their local public health unit.

In the hospital setting, clinicians should alert their hospital's Infection Prevention and Control (IPAC) department to ensure appropriate management of the individual.

Individuals for whom a negative result for COVID-19 is obtained should continue physical distancing, avoiding public spaces and self-monitoring for symptoms.

Management of Symptomatic Persons NOT Being Tested for COVID-19 (Probable cases)

Due to testing prioritization by clinicians, not all individuals with respiratory symptoms compatible with COVID-19 and a risk of exposure will be tested for COVID-19. These individuals should have ready access to information on worsening signs and symptoms that should prompt urgent medical attention. Examples of worsening symptoms can include: severe difficulty breathing, severe chest pain, having a very hard time waking up, feeling confused, and/or lost consciousness.

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Health care providers managing symptomatic individuals who are not being tested for COVID-19 should:

- ✓ Report these individuals to public health
- ✓ Advise the individual to self-isolate for 14 days after first symptom onset
- ✓ Additional individuals that should also be advised to self-isolate include:
 - Household contacts of the symptomatic individual
 - Close contacts of the symptomatic individual before the ill individual began self-isolation
 - Other individuals in close contact with the symptomatic individual 48 hours before the ill individual's symptoms started and/or when the individual became symptomatic
- ✓ Provide information to individual to minimize risk for those living with vulnerable individuals in the home while self-isolating. Fact sheets are available on our website, york.ca/covid19

Recovery Criteria for Persons NOT being Tested for COVID-19

If individuals can manage their symptoms at home (i.e., not very ill) and are not health care/essential services workers, it is currently recommended that they self-isolate for:

- 14 days from symptom onset

After 14 days, if these individuals are afebrile and their symptoms are improving, they may discontinue self-isolation. Absence of cough is not required for those known to have chronic cough or who are experiencing reactive airways post-infection

- If symptoms or fever are persisting, individuals should follow-up with their primary care provider or Telehealth

Who should be tested for COVID-19?

PHO provided new guidance on COVID-19 testing, as the Province moves from predominantly travel-related cases to increased local transmission of COVID-19. **Testing for COVID-19 should be based on clinical assessment, and not based on the case definition. Generally speaking, asymptomatic well individuals should not be tested.**

NOTE: ALL SYMPTOMATIC WORKERS IN ANY HEALTH CARE SETTING SHOULD BE TESTED FOR COVID-19.

At this time, all specimens will be tested if submitted. However, if/where there are shortages of testing supplies, the following groups should be **prioritized** for testing to inform public health and clinical management for these individuals:

- Symptomatic health care workers (regardless of care delivery setting) and staff who work in health care facilities.
- Symptomatic residents and staff in Long Term Care and Retirement Homes
- Hospitalized patients admitted with respiratory symptoms (new or exacerbated)
- Symptomatic members of remote, isolated, rural and/or Indigenous communities
- Symptomatic travelers identified at a point of entry to Canada
- Symptomatic individuals who work in child care settings or live/work in shelters, group homes, or other settings with vulnerable individuals (e.g., those with weakened immune systems, older adults, those with underlying health conditions etc.)