

COVID-19 Updates: Case Updates & Situation in York Region

Update to York Region health care providers as of March 17, 2020

What is the latest case definition?

While there were some proposed changes to the case definition during the week of March 9 that implied prioritizing COVID-19 testing for select sub-groups, this is no longer the recommendation as per the Ministry of Health. The most recent up-to-date case definition can be found at this link and may be updated again in the next day or two:

http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/publichealth/coronavirus/2019_guidance.aspx

People that meet definition as a probable case at this time should be assessed and tested if capacity and materials locally allow (previous surveillance definition of Person Under Investigation (PUI) no longer exists).

Where to direct your patients:

- **The province has released a screening tool for patients to help guide where and if they need to be seen. The tool is live on our website at york.ca/covid19**
- If you, as a health care provider, have questions around testing/assessment we do have a health providers only line you may phone for public health, epidemiological advice (phone number below). Please do not provide your patients with the health provider number. Patients are advised to please first visit our website or call 311.
- We are experiencing very high call volumes and are actively trying to redirect clients that are **well** to our website york.ca/covid19 for advice around self-isolation, monitoring, and to answer general questions.
- Our priority at the moment is hearing from health care providers that are seeing residents that are experiencing symptoms and may meet case definition (i.e., they are unwell AND have either traveled outside of Canada OR have been in contact with a case OR in contact with an ill person that has traveled outside of Canada).
- When we hear from people that meet case definition or have symptoms, we are ensuring that they either have been or will have their symptoms and signs assessed by a clinician (ideally over the phone and/or an assessment centre where appropriate), as Public Health staff do not do clinical assessments/diagnostics. **Please note York Region Public Health offices do NOT test for COVID-19**

Assessment Centres in York Region

[Mackenzie Health](#) and [Southlake Regional Health Centre](#) have both opened their own COVID-19 assessment centres. [Markham-Stouffville Hospital](#) will open on Wednesday. The centres are located in or adjacent to each of the respective hospitals. The goals of Assessment Centres are to facilitate testing for possible cases of the novel coronavirus and help ensure local hospital emergency departments are focused on treating people who are critically ill and have life-threatening illnesses or injuries.



Hospitals, not public health, are in charge of assessment centres. Each York Region hospital will manage their assessment centre based on their operational capacity. Ensure to check your local hospital's website for specific hours of operation and procedures.

Currently, you may send a patient to a COVID-19 Assessment Centre if they are **experiencing symptoms of COVID-19** and within the past 14 days they have:

- Travelled outside of Canada OR
- Been in close contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 OR
- Been in close contact with someone who has recently travelled outside of Canada and **IS experiencing symptoms** of COVID-19 such as fever over 38 degrees Celsius and/or coughing

Patients who are not experiencing symptoms should not be sent to an assessment centre. Please note: criteria for assessment centres and the case definition may change.

Patients who test positive for COVID-19 will be contacted by York Region Public Health for follow up and monitoring. It is vitally important that you report to us promptly when you've tested someone. Please don't advise patients to call us with results, we will follow up with them.

What is the latest on the situation and advice to the public in York Region?

The advice to the general public is that of **social distancing**. For what this means, and Ontario's newest recommendations to the public, please visit york.ca/covid19. We ask that you please be familiar with Ontario's recommendations so you can help reinforce to your patients.

A smaller group of people will be told to **self-isolate**, which is much more restrictive than social distancing and includes not leaving your home except for urgent needs like urgent medical care. This advice of self-isolation is given to people either by the airport (e.g., returning travelers), public health officials (e.g., close contacts of COVID-19 cases) and health professionals (i.e., **everyone that is tested or suspected to have COVID-19 needs to be told to self-isolate**). For more info on the exact advice for different groups please visit: york.ca/covid19

If you are testing someone for COVID-19, please make sure you promptly report them to York Region Public Health. Tell the individual you test to self-isolate until they know their results are negative AND/OR they receive further direction from Public Health.

Health professionals can reach YRPH:

1-877-464-9675 ext. 77280: Between 8 a.m. and 8 p.m., seven days a week

OR

905-953-6478: After hours