
SUBJECT: COVID-19: Testing Update for Facilities
Date: June 3, 2020
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To: Long-Term Care Facilities, Retirement Homes
From: Dr. Nicola Mercer, Medical Officer of Health and CEO

Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health (WDGPH) is the lead agency for COVID-19 outbreak management. If a resident develops symptoms of COVID-19, please notify WDGPH who will advise regarding specimen collection. Long-term care and retirement homes should continue testing based on the Provincial Testing Guidance.

Surveillance (asymptomatic) testing in non-outbreak situations should be conducted by individual facilities, with support from Ontario Health as appropriate. This includes the ongoing testing of long-term care staff outlined in the May 31 memo from the Ministry of Long-Term Care.

Surveillance Testing:

- If you will require specimen collection kits (swabs), please notify WDGPH when planning surveillance testing to ensure adequate supplies are available.
- Use the investigation number assigned to your facility by Ontario Health.
- Please order tests using the facility physician, or as otherwise directed by Ontario Health.
- Use the most current COVID-19 specific requisition posted on the Public Health Ontario Lab website.
- In order for results to be available to staff online, a valid health card number and postal code must be included on the requisition.
- WDGPH will only receive notification of positive results.
- Please follow any additional guidance or direction received from Ontario Health.

Symptomatic testing continues daily as needed. Ordering of swabs and specimen pick-up and delivery will be coordinated by WDGPH for symptomatic testing.

Transport of Specimens on Weekends

Please be advised that WDGPH's process for picking up specimens on weekends has changed.

- If a resident in your facility develops symptoms of COVID-19 on the weekend, please notify WDGPH immediately at the after-hours number below. WDGPH will advise regarding specimen collection from the ill resident and any close contacts. Please ensure that ill residents and contacts are appropriately isolated pending test results.

- Specimens collected after 2:00 p.m. on Friday will be picked up by noon on Sunday for courier to the laboratory.
- Specimens collected after 10:00 a.m. on Sunday will be picked up on Monday.
- All COVID-19 specimens stored on site must be stored between 2-8 degrees. Do not store specimens in your vaccine refrigerator.
- Specimens requiring 'stat' pick up will be determined on a case-by-case basis at the discretion of the Medical Officer of Health.

For more information, please contact:

Name/Title: Marlene Jantzi-Bauman, Program Manager, Control of Infectious Disease
Phone: 519-822-2715 / 1-800-265-7293 ext. 5686, after hours 1-877-884-8653
Website: www.wdgpublichealth.ca