
SUBJECT: Revised Case Definition for COVID-19
DATE: February 27, 2020
PAGES: 1 (with 2 page attachment)
TO: Primary Care Providers, Emergency Departments, Infection Control Practitioners
FROM: Dr. Nicola Mercer, Medical Officer of Health and CEO

Background:

Effective today, the national case definition for COVID-19 has been revised (see attached) to reflect the risk of disease transmission outside of mainland China. The definition of a Person Under Investigation (PUI) now includes individuals with symptoms and recent travel (≤ 14 days prior to symptom onset) to any one of the following areas:

- Mainland China
- Hong Kong
- Iran
- Italy
- Japan
- Singapore
- South Korea.

Please ensure that patients phoning or visiting your office are screened for COVID-19 based on their symptoms, travel history, and close contact with possible cases of COVID-19. An updated screening tool is available at wdgpublichealth.ca/hcpcoronavirus alongside all Ministry of Health Guidance documents on COVID-19 including information on home isolation for PUIs.

Can I test patients for COVID-19 if they do not meet the PUI Case Definition?

COVID-19 testing should be conducted when the patient meets the national case definition. While it is recommended that providers test in accordance with the current case definition, information about this virus continues to evolve. Therefore, providers may determine, based on assessment and clinical judgement, that testing for COVID-19 is appropriate outside of the case definition.

As of February 10, PHO Laboratory pre-approval is no longer required for COVID-19 testing. The COVID-19 Test Requisition and additional information about specimen collection are available on the Public Health Ontario website. If you are planning to test your patient for COVID-19, please notify WDGPH as soon as possible.

Testing requires the ability to take appropriate airborne/droplet/contact precautions (including use of a fit-tested N95 mask) during specimen collection. If your patient requires COVID-19 testing but you are unable to offer this in your clinical setting, please contact WDGPH and we will help to determine the most appropriate setting for testing to occur.

Health care providers can speak with a Public Health Nurse about COVID-19 by calling WDGPH's Coronavirus Call Centre at 1-800-265-7293 ext. 7006 Monday - Friday 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.; after hours 1-877-884-8653