

SUBJECT: COVID-19: Testing Guidance for Practitioners and Assessment Centres
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To: Assessment Centres, Primary Care Providers
From: Dr. Nicola Mercer, Medical Officer of Health and CEO

Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health is working to intensify our efforts to identify people with COVID-19 in our community. We are particularly focused on vulnerable community members and to essential workers as part of expanded testing priorities, but are expanding capacity to test all symptomatic community members in line with the provincial guidance. At this time, there is sufficient supply of specimen collection kits (swabs) to support increased testing.

Our call centre staff will be referring clients from the community to Assessment Centres for testing if they display the signs and symptoms of COVID-19.

Individuals with any of the following features should be tested, as resources permit:

- Fever (Temperature of 37.8°C or greater); OR
- Any new/worsening acute respiratory illness symptom (e.g. cough, shortness of breath (dyspnea), sore throat, runny nose or sneezing, nasal congestion, hoarse voice, difficulty swallowing, new olfactory or taste disorder(s), nausea/vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal pain); OR
- Clinical or radiological evidence of pneumonia.

Atypical presentations of COVID-19 will be considered, particularly in elderly persons.

Testing Guidance for Community Practitioners and Assessment Centres

When there are shortages of testing supplies, the following groups should be prioritized for testing within 24 hours 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 facilities and retirement homes and other institutional settings;
- Hospitalized patients admitted with respiratory symptoms (new or exacerbated);
- Symptomatic members of remote, isolated, rural and/or indigenous communities;
- Symptomatic travellers identified at a point of entry to Canada;
- Symptomatic first responders (i.e. firefighters, police); and
- Individuals referred for testing by WDGPH.

Clinicians should continue to apply their clinical judgement when determining which individuals to test and consider testing those with underlying medical risk factors for poorer outcomes including Diabetes, Hypertension, older age and coronary heart disease.

Except in specific circumstances as directed by Public Health during Outbreak investigations, testing asymptomatic individuals is not recommended.