
SUBJECT: COVID-19 Updates: Testing and Case Management
Date: March 27, 2020
Pages: 2 (with two attachments)
To: Primary Care Providers, Emergency Departments, Hospitals, Infection Control Practitioners
From: Dr. Nicola Mercer, Medical Officer of Health and CEO

COVID-19 Testing Update

The following groups should be prioritized for testing:

- Symptomatic health care workers (regardless of care delivery setting) and staff working in health care facilities.
- Symptomatic residents and staff in long-term care facilities, retirement homes and other institutional settings.
- Hospitalized patients 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.
- Individuals for whom testing is recommended by the Medical Officer of Health.

Although testing for COVID-19 can be performed outside of these criteria, based on clinical judgement, it should be the exception and not routinely performed.

WDGPH is aware of recent delays in receiving COVID-19 test results from the provincial lab. Public Health Ontario is working to increase its testing capacity and is prioritizing test results for patients at greatest risk. Individuals who are awaiting test results should continue to isolate until results are available.

Management of Individuals Awaiting Test Results

WDGPH is notified of all COVID-19 test results for patients who live in Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph. Test results for patients who live outside of our boundaries are managed by the respective public health unit. Please advise your patients that we are currently following up test results as follows:

- For **NEGATIVE** results, WDGPH will phone the patient within one business day of receiving the result. We will inform patients of the result and communicate that they can discontinue their isolation. However, individuals who are also self-isolating for another reason (e.g. returned international traveller) should continue to self-isolate for the balance of the applicable time period.
- For **POSITIVE** results, WDGPH follows up with the patient to collect a case history and provide guidance about isolation. WDGPH also identifies and follows up with close contacts who may need to self-isolate or self-monitor for symptoms. The case should continue in isolation until the Case Resolution Criteria (attached) are met.

Management of Individuals Who Are Not Tested (With or Without a Travel History)

Not every individual with symptoms needs to be tested for COVID-19.

Individuals with compatible symptoms (attached) who are not tested should be advised to isolate at home until the Case Resolution Criteria are met. These individuals can discontinue isolation when:

- 14 days have passed since the onset of the first symptom, AND
- The individual is afebrile, AND
- The individual's symptoms are improving.

Absence of a cough is not required for those known to have a chronic cough or who are experiencing reactive airways post-infection.

Close contacts (including household contacts) of these individuals should also be advised to self-isolate for 14 days from their last contact.

Additional Guidance for Health Care Workers

Health care workers who are returned travellers or who are close contacts of known cases should self-isolate. However, they may attend work if they are asymptomatic AND they are deemed critical, by all parties, to the continued operations of their health care setting. Most healthcare workers do not qualify as critical to the operation of the health care setting. While at work, they must closely self-monitor for symptoms and follow additional recommendations from the Chief Medical Officer of Health (memo attached). If symptoms develop, the health care worker must leave the workplace and immediately isolate.

Health care workers who test COVID-19 positive: In addition to the requirement to be 14 days post symptom onset, afebrile and improving two negative COVID-19 tests, obtained at least 24 hours apart, must be performed prior to return to work. Testing will be arranged by WDGPH.

For more information, refer to contact or website:

Name/Title: WDG Public Health, Physicians Call Centre

Contact: 1-800-265-7293 ext. 7011 / www.wdgpublichealth.ca