

SUBJECT: Revised Clearance Criteria for COVID-19 Positive Patients
Date: October 14, 2020
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To: Physicians, Hospital Emergency Departments, Primary Care Providers, Assessment Centres
From: Dr. Nicola Mercer, Medical Officer of Health & CEO

Please be advised that Ontario's Ministry of Health has recently updated the clearance criteria for COVID-19 positive results. When a case meets the criteria below, she or he is no longer considered infectious to others and can discontinue self-isolation. A summary of the new criteria is included in the table, below.

Patients who have mild-to-moderate illness AND no severe immune compromise	Patients who have severe illness OR severe immune compromise
Patient can be considered resolved when: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 days have passed since symptom onset (or specimen collection date if asymptomatic) • Patient is afebrile • Symptoms have been improving for at least 24 hours 	Patient can be considered resolved when: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 20 days have passed since symptom onset (or specimen collection date if asymptomatic) • Patient is afebrile • Symptoms have been improving for at least 24 hours

Most patients, including those with **mild-to-moderate illness**, can be considered cleared **10 days following symptom onset** (or specimen collection, if asymptomatic), provided that they are afebrile and symptoms have been improving for at least 24 hours. Absence of symptoms such as cough is not required.

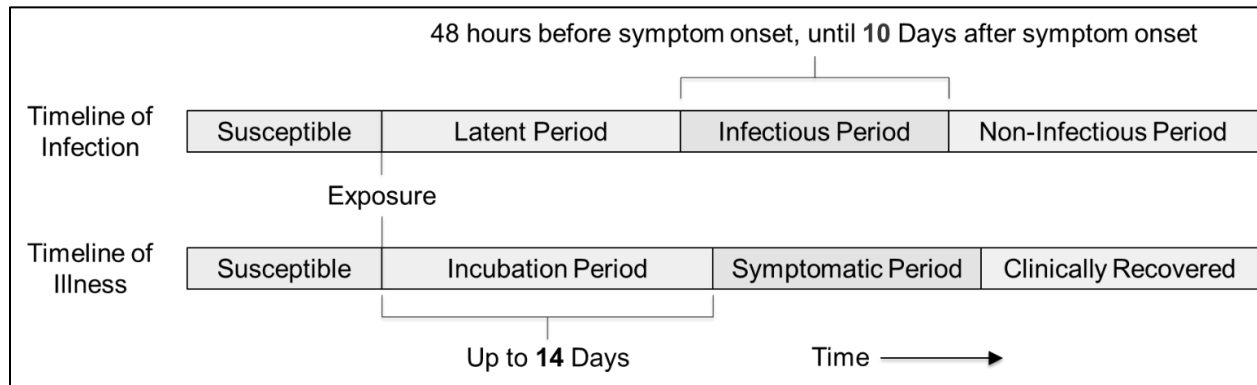
Patients who are **severely ill** or who have **severe immune compromise** should not be cleared until **20 days following symptom onset** (or specimen collection, if asymptomatic), provided that they are afebrile and symptoms have been improving for at least 24 hours.

- Severe illness is defined as requiring ICU level care because of COVID-19 (e.g. respiratory dysfunction, hypoxia, shock and/or multi-system organ dysfunction)
- Examples of severe immune compromise would include:
 - Cancer chemotherapy
 - Untreated HIV infection with CD4 count < 200
 - Combined primary immunodeficiency disorder
 - Taking prednisone > 20 mg/day for more than 14 days
 - Taking other immune suppressive medications

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Factors such as advanced age, diabetes, and end-stage renal disease are not considered severe immune compromise for the purposes of COVID-19 case clearance.

Please note that while the guidance for **clearing cases** has changed, the guidance for **self-isolation of contacts** has not changed. Close contacts of COVID-19 cases must still self-isolate for **14 days** when directed to do so by WDGPH.



- The *infectious period* is the time during which a COVID-19 case can transmit to others. Per the revised provincial guidance, the infectious period now ends 10 days after symptom onset for most cases (i.e. not severely ill or immune compromised).
- The *incubation period* is the time from exposure to developing symptoms. This is still considered to be up to 14 days; accordingly, the self-isolation guidance for contacts has not changed.

In prior guidance, both the infectious period and incubation period were 14 days. However, these are distinct and unrelated time intervals.

For additional information regarding the case clearance criteria, please refer to the Ministry of Health’s COVID-19 Quick Reference Public Health Guidance on Testing and Clearance. The most recent version can be found on the Ministry’s web page with Guidance for the Health Sector.

For more information, please contact:

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