Guidance for Primary Care Providers caring for patients with COVID-19 and their close contacts

This guide should not replace the primary care provider's clinical judgment.

1. Instruct patients to self-isolate

- Symptomatic individuals must self-isolate until tested and results are received. Refer patient to Public Health Ontario's How to Self-Isolate factsheet and review with them as appropriate.
- If positive, self-isolation must continue for 10 days after symptom onset provided patient is afebrile and clinically improved at the end of the 10-day period. Asymptomatic individuals are required to self-isolate for 10 days from the date they were tested provided they remain asymptomatic.
- Public Health will contact the patient and their close contacts to provide further direction on self-isolation and return-to-work guidance.
- Please refer to the Ministry of Health's COVID-19 Quick Reference Public Health Guidance on Testing and Clearance (as current).



2. Self-care while isolating

- Supportive treatment with over-the-counter antipyretics can be provided if deemed appropriate for the patient.
- Advise patient to keep a log of daily temperature checks, at least four hours after the latest dose of antipyretic.
- Keep the area well ventilated. Open windows and avoid tobacco or other smoke if possible.
- Stay connected with friends and family by phone or computer.
- Halton Region's Mental Health webpage includes supports the patient and their family may find helpful during the COVID-19 pandemic.



3. Isolation requirements for caregivers, household members and close contacts

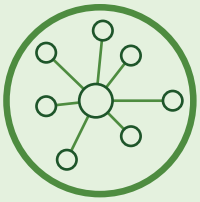
- Individuals who had close contact with a probable or confirmed case, either by living in the same household, providing care, or otherwise had prolonged contact, must self-isolate for 14 days from their last exposure to the patient.
- It is recommended that all close contacts get tested. A negative test result does not change their self-isolation period. If they develop symptoms in the 14 days, they will need to get re-tested.
- Refer to Public Health Ontario's Self-isolation: Guide for Caregivers, Household Members and Close Contacts.



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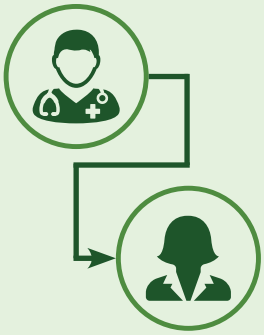
4. Contact tracing

- Public Health will get in touch with the patient to complete contact management.
- The period of communicability for the patient is 48 hours before symptom onset or testing until their self-isolation period is complete.
- Ask the patient to create a list of places and people they came into close physical contact with during that time. In non-health care settings, this is considered to be contact of 15 minutes or more within two meters distance of each other.
- If the patient is comfortable, they can notify their own contacts if public health has not yet been in contact. They should instruct their close contacts to self-isolate for 14 days after their last exposure to the patient.
- Any contacts who are health care providers or work in health care institutions should get direction from their occupational health department.
- Patient should notify their workplace (Occupational Health and Safety representative and/or supervisor/manager) of the positive test result for COVID-19.
- Low risk or casual interactions require no follow-up. Examples include walking by or briefly being in the same room.



5. Patient follow up

- Remind your patients that they should monitor their symptoms. Advise them when to seek medical attention or call 911, e.g. "If you feel chest pain, shortness of breath, or have difficulty breathing, call 911 and tell them you have tested positive for COVID-19."
- Most individuals with mild to moderate illness (e.g. never hospitalized), can discontinue isolation 10 days after symptom onset, provided they are afebrile and symptoms are improving.
- Guidance on clearance of individuals suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19 is outlined in the Ministry's COVID-19 Quick Reference Public Health Guidance on Testing and Clearance (as current).



Health professionals can stay up-to-date by visiting **halton.ca/physicians** and **halton.ca/COVID19**.