

HALTON REGION PUBLIC HEALTH • Office of the Medical Officer of Health

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TO: Halton Physicians, Nurse Practitioners, Emergency Departments

FROM: Dr. Hamidah Meghani, Medical Officer of Health

DATE: May 22, 2020

RE: **Section 22 Class Order, COVID-19 Updates, & Immunization Guidance**

Section 22 Class Order

- Effective May 22, 2020, Halton Region's Medical Officer of Health issued a class order under Section 22 of the Health Protection and Promotion Act (HPPA).
- A class order is a legal tool that enables Halton Region Public Health to enforce self-isolation requirements for all individuals who have been advised to do so.
- These efforts are being made to protect the local community from potential exposure to COVID-19.
- All patients being tested at assessment centres will receive the attached post-card with information on the Class Order and instructions on self-isolation.
- An FAQ document about the Class Order is attached for your reference and can also be provided to patients.
- For more information, please visit halton.ca/covid19

COVID-19 Testing Updates

- Updated provincial [testing guidance](#) has been released by the Ministry of Health.
- Any individual presenting with at least one symptom or sign of COVID-19 should be considered for testing.
- Halton residents can be referred for COVID-19 assessment & testing in the following ways:
 - Residents of Oakville, Milton or Halton Hills can book an appointment at a Halton Healthcare Assessment Centre by calling 905-203-7963;
 - Residents of Burlington can call 905-632-3737 ext. 6550 to book an appointment at the Joseph Brant Hospital COVID Assessment Clinic.

Managing COVID-19 Patients

- See attached guidance for information on managing patients who test positive for COVID-19.

Other COVID-19 Guidance Updates

- Visit the Ministry of Health [COVID-19 website](#) for the following updated guidance documents:
 - [Case definition](#)
 - [Testing guidance](#)
 - [Symptoms list](#)
 - [Patient screening](#)
 - [Acute care guidance](#)
- Check the Ministry of Health COVID-19 website regularly for the most up to date guidance documents.

Immunization Guidelines

- The National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI) has released [interim guidance on immunizations](#) during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Key highlights include:
 - Deferring immunizations in symptomatic individuals;
 - Providing post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) for vaccine preventable diseases;
 - Prioritization of primary immunization series for infants and toddlers;
 - Immunizations during pregnancy;
 - Immunizations for special populations; and
 - Seasonal influenza immunization

Please report all suspected/confirmed cases of [Diseases of Public Health Significance](#) to Public Health immediately by calling 311, 905-825-6000 or toll free at 1-866-442-5866.

PLEASE POST IN EMERGENCY DEPARTMENTS AND PHYSICIAN LOUNGES
IF YOU CAN'T ACCESS HYPERLINKS, PLEASE SIGN UP FOR ELECTRONIC UPDATES BY EMAILING
DOCTORS@HALTON.CA

COVID-19 Class Order: May 22, 2020

What is a class order?

A class order is a legal order that enables Halton Region Public Health to enforce self-isolation requirements for a group of individuals that it applies to. These efforts are being made to protect the local community from potential exposure to COVID-19.

Under what authority has this class order been issued?

On May 21, 2020, Halton Region's Medical Officer of Health issued a class order under Section 22 of the *Health Protection and Promotion Act*. This Act authorizes a class order to be issued to address the risks presented by the potential spread of COVID-19 to people who reside or are present in Halton Region.

Why did the Medical Officer of Health issue this class order?

As restrictions begin to loosen at the provincial and local levels, more people will be out in the community and it is therefore more important than ever to ensure that those who need to self-isolate do so, for the protection of all residents.

The class order was issued in order to strengthen Halton Region Public Health's ability to reduce the loss of life from COVID-19, and preserve and protect the capacity of our health care system to respond and provide care for those who need it.

While the vast majority of people who have or may have COVID-19, as well as their close contacts, have been compliant with instructions from public health authorities to self-isolate, there are individuals who do not take these measures seriously enough or whose life circumstances make it difficult to comply. Halton Region Public Health is available to provide support to those who need assistance. However, this class order is a legal tool to help us ensure that everyone who needs to self-isolate, complies with that direction.

Who is required to self-isolate under this class order?

All persons residing in or present in Halton Region who:

- a) are diagnosed with COVID-19;
- b) have been tested for COVID-19 and are awaiting the results of their test;
- c) have one or more symptoms (even mild symptoms) of COVID-19, or have had such symptom(s) within the past 14 days;
- d) are a close contact of a person identified in (a), (b) or (c); or
- e) are a parent, or person with responsibilities of a parent, of a person under sixteen years of age identified in (a), (b), (c) or (d) who resides or is present in Halton Region.

Further details on the symptoms of COVID-19 and the definition of "close contact" are included in the class order.

When is the class order effective? How long must people self-isolate?

The class order is effective from 12:01 a.m. on May 22, 2020 and will remain in effect until such time as the Medical Officer of Health determines it is no longer required.

Self-isolation is generally for a period of 14 days from the first onset of symptom(s), from testing or from diagnosis with COVID-19, whichever is earliest, and provided the individual does not have a fever and their other symptom(s) are improving on the 14th day. For close contacts, it is usually for 14 days from last known exposure to the probable or confirmed case of COVID-19. Sometimes, public health officials may direct an individual to extend the period of isolation, depending upon symptoms and test results.

Are there any exceptions?

Yes, modifications to the class order can be made for the following people:

- a person who, in the opinion of the Medical Officer of Health, provides an essential service, for the limited purpose of providing that essential service;
- a person receiving essential medical services or treatments, whether related to COVID-19 or not; or
- where a person's isolation, in the opinion of the Medical Officer of Health, would not be in the public interest.

Please contact Halton Region Public Health at accesshalton@halton.ca or 311 (in Halton) or toll-free 1-866-442-5866 for more information

What does it mean to self-isolate under the class order?

Individuals who are affected by the class order are required to stay at home and not to have visitors, except as permitted by Halton Region Public Health (for example, where a health care worker is visiting the home). The other things you must do while self-isolating are explained in the class order and the Public Health Ontario fact sheet, *How to Self-Isolate*, that forms part of that order.

If a person with COVID-19 is homeless or their home is otherwise unsuitable or unsafe for isolation purposes, assistance with accommodations can be provided.

People in self-isolation should arrange to have groceries and other necessities delivered to them. If you need assistance, please see our list of resources at halton.ca/COVID19.

I am required to self-isolate but need support to do so. Who should I contact?

Halton Region Public Health is available to assist residents who need help in order to properly self-isolate or while self-isolating. Individuals who need support can contact Halton Region Public Health by email at accesshalton@halton.ca or by calling 311 (in Halton) or toll-free 1-866-442-5866.

What should I do if my illness gets worse while I am self-isolating?

Seek **immediate** medical attention if your illness is worsening (for example, you have difficulty breathing) by **calling 9-1-1**. Tell them of your COVID-19 diagnosis or symptom(s) and answer all screening questions accurately (including symptoms and travel history) so that you will receive appropriate care and the right infection prevention and control precautions are taken.

How could the class order be enforced if a person fails to self-isolate?

As is our general practice with these kinds of orders, Halton Region Public Health will attempt to engage directly with a person failing to self-isolate to make sure that they understand what is required of them, and to see if they need support in an effort to gain voluntary compliance. If these efforts are unsuccessful, the MOH will consider the need for legal action to compel compliance.

Individuals who are required to self-isolate by this class order but fail to do so can be charged and fined up to \$5,000 per day. The *Health Protection and Promotion Act* also allows the MOH to go to court and seek an order to protect the health of the community by taking the person into custody to be confined in a hospital or other appropriate facility until the self-isolation period is over.

For more information, contact Halton Region Public Health by email at accesshalton@halton.ca or call 311 (in Halton) or toll-free 1-866-442-5866.

Can a person challenge the class order?

Any person subject to the class order may request a hearing by the Health Services Appeal and Review Board to challenge its requirements. Refer to the class order for details.

How does the Medical Officer of Health's class order under the *Health Protection and Promotion Act* differ from the federal order under the *Quarantine Act*?

The federal government's quarantine order is aimed at all travellers entering Canada, effective March 25, 2020. That order also imposes a 14-day home quarantine (self-isolation) on travellers regardless whether they have symptoms of COVID-19. See the Government of Canada's [instructions for travellers from outside Canada](#) for more information.

In some cases, individuals subject to home quarantine or isolation measures under the federal quarantine order may also be subject to the class order issued by Halton Region's Medical Officer of Health (for example, individuals who are diagnosed with COVID-19 and have also recently returned from travel).

More Information:

If you have questions about the class order, please contact Halton Region Public Health:

- by phone: 311 (in Halton) or toll-free 1-866-442-5866; or
- by email: accesshalton@halton.ca.

Residents who have COVID-19 symptoms can be assessed by a health care provider:

- at an Assessment Centre (you must have an appointment):
 - **Residents of Oakville, Milton or Halton Hills:** Call 905-203-7963 to book an appointment at a Halton Healthcare Assessment Centre.
 - **Residents of Burlington:** Call 905-632-3737, ext. 6550, to book an appointment at Joseph Brant Hospital COVID-19 Assessment Clinic.
- by contacting their primary care provider.

Managing patients who test positive for COVID-19 (2019 Novel Coronavirus)

Guidance for primary care providers notifying patients of positive COVID-19 results. This guide should not replace the primary care provider's clinical judgment.

1. Instruct patient to self-isolate

- Refer patient to Public Health Ontario's [How to Self-Isolate factsheet](#) and review with them as appropriate.
- For most people, self-isolation will be a minimum of 14 days following symptom onset, provided they are afebrile and clinically improved at the end of the 14-day period. Please refer to the Ministry of Health's [COVID-19 Quick Reference Public Health Guidance on Testing and Clearance](#) (as current).
- Public Health will contact the patient and advise on when they can complete their self-isolation.



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

- Those who lived with or provided care for the patient during their period of communicability will need to self-isolate for 14 days after their last exposure to the patient.
- Refer to Public Health Ontario's [Self-isolation: Guide for Caregivers, Household Members and Close Contacts](#).



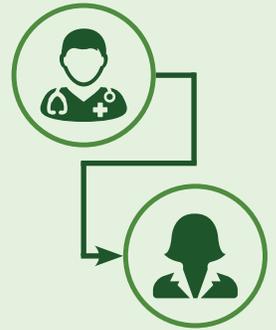
4. Contact tracing

- Confirm dates of period of communicability (48 hours before symptom onset until date of self-isolation).
- Ask the patient to create a list of places and people they came into close physical contact with during that time. Public Health will contact the patient to assist with contact tracing. In non-health care settings, this is considered to be contact for 15 minutes and less than two metres apart.
- The patient should notify their workplace (Occupational Health and Safety representative and/or supervisor/manager) of the positive test result for COVID-19.



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 14 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 Region’s [Information for Physicians webpage](#) and halton.ca/COVID19.



Self-Isolation after COVID-19 Testing

1. Return home and **remain in self-isolation** until you receive your test results or further direction from Public Health.
2. Self-isolation means that you must **stay at home** and **stay away from others** (see reverse side for how to self-isolate). You are **required** to self-isolate under a class order issued by the Medical Officer of Health under *Section 22* of the *Health Protection and Promotion Act* that applies in Halton Region. Visit [halton.ca/COVID19](https://www.halton.ca/COVID19) to learn about the class order and other steps that you are required to take.
3. Check your COVID-19 lab test results online using the Ontario government's online portal: covid-19.ontario.ca. If **you test positive**, Public Health will contact you.
4. **If your symptoms worsen** while self-isolating (for example, you have difficulty breathing) seek immediate medical attention by **calling 9-1-1**. Tell them of your COVID-19 diagnosis or symptoms and answer all screening questions accurately so that you will receive appropriate care and ensure the correct infection prevention and control precautions are taken.

Questions?

Visit [halton.ca/COVID19](https://www.halton.ca/COVID19)

Email accesshalton@halton.ca

Call 311

How to Self-Isolate

Stay home



- Do not go to work, school or other public places.
- Do not use public transportation, taxis or rideshares.

Avoid contact with others and keep your distance



- As much as possible, stay in a separate room from others and use a separate bathroom if you have one.
- If these steps are not possible, make sure that:
 - you wear a mask that covers your nose and mouth, or
 - if you cannot wear a mask, keep a distance of at least two metres from others at all times
- No visitors unless essential (for example, health care providers).
- Stay away from seniors and people with chronic medical conditions (for example, diabetes, lung problems, immune deficiency).

Wear a mask over your nose and mouth



- Wear a mask if you must leave your house to see a healthcare provider.
- Wear a mask when you are within two metres of other people.

Practice good hygiene



- Wash your hands often with soap and water and dry your hands thoroughly.
- Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available.
- Cough or sneeze into a tissue, your upper sleeve or elbow, not your hand.
- Put used tissue in the garbage and clean your hands after emptying the wastebasket.

For more information about self-isolation and protecting others, please visit halton.ca/COVID19.