

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: March 17, 2020

RE: **Assessing Patients with COVID-19 Symptoms**

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### Patient Assessment Recommendations

- Please **DO NOT turn away patients** without performing appropriate triage/assessment.
- All patients with symptoms consistent with COVID-19 should be assessed by their primary care provider before referring them for testing.
- Patients with symptoms can be assessed in two ways:
  - Over the phone or another virtual platform (e.g. OTN); or
  - In-person using droplet and contact precautions.
- Ontario has approved **new physician billing codes for telephone assessments** to be used during the COVID-19 pandemic period.
- **Patients with MILD symptoms DO NOT require testing** and should NOT be directed to call Halton Region Public Health. The interim guidance is that they self-isolate for 14 days or until 24 hours after all symptoms resolve (whichever is longer).

### New Direction for Essential Workers

- As per new direction from Ontario Chief Medical Officer of Health, workers who have travelled and are part of workplaces that are essential to daily living are able to return to work **as long as they are asymptomatic**. However, they should **self-monitor** for a period of 14 days and identify themselves to their employer so that a plan can be put into place to ensure the protection of those workplaces.
- ALL other returning travellers (including travellers from the United States of America) should self-isolate for 14 days upon return.
- For more information please visit our website at [halton.ca/COVID19](https://halton.ca/COVID19).

We appreciate physicians' commitment to your patients and our community during this public health emergency.

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