



## Instructions for workers in health care facilities and institutions

### Who are these instructions for?

Health professionals and non-health professionals in clinics, health care facilities, and institutions, who may be in contact with patients, residents, inmates, or other co-workers.

- Examples of health professionals include: nurse, doctor, paramedic, therapist, dentist, public health, occupational therapist, physiotherapist, respiratory therapist, and personal support worker.
- Examples of non-health professionals include: reception, housekeeping, administrative, facilities, security, correctional staff, police, and fire personnel.
- Examples of health care facilities and institutions include: primary care office, hospitals, dental clinic, long term care facilities, retirement homes, group homes, correctional facilities, homeless shelters, public health units, and emergency services stations.

### Self-monitoring for COVID-19 symptoms

- All workers and members of their households should routinely self-monitor for the following new or worsening symptoms of COVID-19

<b>Common symptoms</b>	Fever (37.8°C or greater), cough, shortness of breath/difficulty breathing, sore throat, runny nose or sneezing, nasal congestion, hoarse voice, difficulty swallowing, loss of taste/smell, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, or belly pain
<b>Less common symptoms</b>	Unexplained fatigue, delirium (a serious medical condition that involves confusion, changes to memory, and odd behaviours), falls, acute functional decline, worsening of chronic conditions, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal pain, chills, headaches, croup, or loss of taste/smell, rapid heart rate, low blood pressure, extreme weakness, or difficulty feeding in infants

- Symptoms of COVID-19 can start up to 14 days after you last came in close contact with a person with COVID-19.
- Most people with mild symptoms will recover on their own at home.

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## Seeking care

- If you develop symptoms of COVID-19, please use the Government of Ontario COVID-19 self-assessment tool ([covid-19.ontario.ca/self-assessment](https://covid-19.ontario.ca/self-assessment)) to find out how to get further care.
- If you are able to manage your symptoms at home but need to be assessed by a health-care provider or tested for COVID-19, please visit a **COVID-19 Assessment Centre** ([OttawaPublicHealth.ca/COVIDCentre](https://OttawaPublicHealth.ca/COVIDCentre)).
- If you are having escalating symptoms of respiratory illness, including a fever or worsening cough and flu-like symptoms, and are in need of medical attention please go to one of the **COVID-19 Care Clinics** ([OttawaPublicHealth.ca/COVIDClinic](https://OttawaPublicHealth.ca/COVIDClinic)).
- If you are in distress (e.g. significant trouble breathing, chest pain, fainting, or have a significant worsening of any chronic disease symptoms), go to the nearest Emergency Department or call 9-1-1.

## Testing criteria

- If you or any members of your household have any symptoms or signs of COVID-19, the ill person(s) should receive COVID-19 testing.
- If tested for COVID-19 you can check the following Government of Ontario website to receive your COVID-19 test result: [covid-19.ontario.ca](https://covid-19.ontario.ca)
- Ottawa Public Health will **only** contact those who have tested **positive** as part of case and contact management activities.
- Under certain circumstances testing for asymptomatic people may occur. Please visit [ottawapublichealth.ca/en/professionals-and-partners/hcp-ncov.aspx](https://ottawapublichealth.ca/en/professionals-and-partners/hcp-ncov.aspx) for the most up to date information and guidance on testing of asymptomatic people.

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## Self-isolation instructions if you or a household member develops COVID-19 symptoms

- Avoid isolating in a place where there are vulnerable people including people who have a medical condition, compromised immune systems, or older adults.
- Leaving your property to go for a walk is not permitted. Stay in a private place like your yard or balcony if you go outside for fresh air.
- Limit contact with others in the place of isolation, including children.
- Stay in a separate room and use a separate bathroom from others in your home, if possible.
- If you must leave your room, in addition to keeping at least 2 metres (6 feet) apart from other persons in the home, it is best to wear a face mask, cloth or surgical, to protect the other persons.
- Do not have visitors.
- Do not leave your place of isolation unless it's to get medical care.
- Do not use public transportation (e.g., buses, taxis).
- Do not go to school or work in-person (you can attend virtually).
- Do not go into the community, including the grocery store and pharmacy.
- If you need groceries, medication, or other essential items, arrange to have a family member, friend, neighbour, or anyone else who is not in self-isolation do this for you. Have items left at the door to minimize contact.  
*\*If this is not possible, call 2-1-1 for information on the full range of community, social, government and health services and programs available in Ottawa, and how to access them.*
- If you have to be in contact with others, practice physical distancing and keep at least 2 metres (6 feet) between yourself and the other person.

Please refer to [OttawaPublicHealth.ca/Self-Isolate](https://ottawapublichealth.ca/self-isolate) for more information.

### Criteria to end self-isolation

- Discontinuing self-isolation depends on if you have been tested or not tested for COVID-19.
- Please refer to the following table for your situation.

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Approach	Criteria
Test-based approach	Health care workers (HCW) who have tested positive for COVID-19 should remain off work until they receive 2 consecutive negative specimens at least 24 hours apart (OPH recommends that if the first test is positive, a second test should wait for another 7 days).
Non test-based approach	HCWs may return to work 14 days after symptom onset (or as directed by their employer/Occupational Health and Safety department)

- If you work in a health care setting, please also see the “Work Self-isolation Option” section below

## Work Self-isolation Option

*Please note that this applies only if returning to work in a primary care clinic, hospital, long-term care facility, or retirement home*

- For HCW that are agreed to be critical to operations by all parties, earlier return to work may be permitted under work self-isolation
- Work self-isolation requires the following:
  - While at work in a health care setting, you must wear a mask at all times, maintain physical distancing (2 metres or 6 feet from others) except for providing direct care, and continue hand hygiene practices.
  - You must maintain strict self-isolation measures outside of work (i.e., in the home and community) to avoid exposing household members or other community contacts.
  - You must not go into the community or leave your place of isolation unless it's to get medical attention.
  - Ottawa Public Health recommends that you not work in multiple locations.

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For most up to date criteria for workers in health care facilities and institutions to return to work under work self-isolation please visit:

- Ottawa Public Health website for healthcare professionals:  
<https://www.ottawapublichealth.ca/en/professionals-and-partners/hcp-ncov.aspx>
- Ontario Ministry's most recent guidance for healthcare professionals:  
[http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/publichealth/coronavirus/2019\\_guidance.aspx](http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/publichealth/coronavirus/2019_guidance.aspx)

### International travel

- Please note that if you are returning to Canada from international travel, you **MUST** self-isolate for fourteen (14 days) even if you don't have any common or less common symptoms of COVID-19.
- On March 25, 2020 the Government of Canada issued an Emergency Order under the **Quarantine Act** that requires any person entering Canada by air, sea, or land to self-isolate for 14 days, except essential workers who cross the border.
- Please see [canada.ca/COVID19](http://canada.ca/COVID19) for more information.

**Continue physical distancing AFTER your self-isolation has ended – these recommendation apply to all persons:**

- Keep at least 2 metres (6 feet) between yourself and other people.
- Cancel all group gatherings.
- Connect via phone, video chat, or social media instead of in person.
- Talk to your employer about working from home (if possible).
- Avoid visiting elderly friends or relatives unless the visit is essential.
- Keep windows down for essential community trips via taxi or rideshares.
- You can go outside for a walk. Make an effort to step-aside or pass others quickly and courteously on sidewalks. Passing someone on the sidewalk is not considered close contact or a significant risk for exposure to COVID-19.

Please refer to [OttawaPublicHealth.ca/Coronavirus](https://OttawaPublicHealth.ca/Coronavirus) for more information.

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