

Subject: Confirmed Positive COVID-19 Test

Dear Client,

Due to more people testing positive for COVID-19 and the spread of the Omicron variant, Ottawa Public Health (OPH) is changing case and contact management practices in Ottawa. This includes asking you to tell your high-risk contacts that you have tested positive for COVID-19. Please read this entire letter carefully and follow the instructions.

You have tested positive for the COVID-19 virus. This letter has the most important information you need to know to take care of yourself and others. You are **required to self-isolate for either 5 or 10 days** from the day your first symptom started or your test date if you have no symptoms. If you traveled, follow the self-isolation directions from the federal Quarantine Officer. More information on travel and quarantine is available from the [Government of Canada travel website](#).

This is the law and you can find more information about the [Class Order](#) on the OPH website: www.ottawapublichealth.ca/covid19instructions. We appreciate your part in helping to stop the spread in our community.

What should you do during your self-isolation?

- Stay at home.
- Get fresh air by spending time in your yard or on your patio or balcony. You must remain on your property.
- Have all groceries, medications, and other necessities delivered to your door by a delivery service, friend, or family member. Do not invite them inside your home.
- Postpone all elective medical and dental appointments until your self-isolation period is over.
- Have someone outside of your household take your dog for a walk.
- Do not take public transportation if you need to go for medical care.
- Take the time to do the indoor things you love, such as reading, painting, watching movies or gaming.

How do you self-isolate in a household of multiple people?

Self-isolation also means having no contact with the people in your household (or as limited as possible) to stop the spread of COVID-19.

- It is important that you have your own bedroom and bathroom to self-isolate.
- If you share a bathroom, disinfect areas you touch (toilet flush handle, countertop, and taps) after each use. Use paper towels or separate hand towels to dry your hands.
- Eat meals in your room away from others. Use your own cutlery, plate, and glass.

- Wear a mask when you leave your room and only enter common spaces when other household members are not around.
- Disinfect the areas you touch that others may come in contact with.
- If you are the primary care provider to someone in your home and you need to care for them, wear a mask and practice hand hygiene.

When can you end your self-isolation?

Self-isolation can be discontinued after:

10 days from your symptom onset if you are:

- ✓ 12 years of age or older **AND** either partially vaccinated or unvaccinated.
- ✓ Immune compromised, regardless of your age or vaccination status.

OR

5 days from your symptom onset and your symptoms have been improving for 24 hours (or 48 hours if gastrointestinal symptoms) if you are:

- ✓ 12 years of age or older **AND** fully vaccinated*.
- ✓ 11 years old or younger, regardless of your vaccination status.

This means you can leave the house even if other household members continue to self-isolate. If one of your family members tests positive for COVID-19 from the same exposure as you or from you (and not another new exposure), you do not need to re-isolate.

If you attend, work or volunteer at a **highest risk setting****, you must avoid the highest risk setting for 10 days from the day your symptoms started or your test date if you don't have symptoms.

***Fully vaccinated** means that it has been at least 14 days since you received:

- The full series of a COVID-19 vaccine authorized by Health Canada (e.g., two doses of Moderna, Pfizer-BioNTech or AstraZeneca/COVISHIELD, or one dose of Janssen [Johnson & Johnson]) or any combination of such vaccines, or
- One or two doses of a COVID-19 vaccine not authorized by Health Canada (e.g., Sinopharm) followed by one dose of a COVID-19 mRNA vaccine authorized by Health Canada (e.g., Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna) or
- Three doses of a COVID-19 vaccine not authorized by Health Canada (e.g., Abdala).

****Highest risk settings include:**

- Hospitals and health care settings***, including complex continuing care facilities and acute care facilities.
- Congregate living settings, e.g. long-term care homes, retirement homes, First Nation elder care lodges, group homes, shelters, hospices, temporary foreign worker settings, and correctional institutions.
- First Nations, Inuit, Métis communities.

Last updated: Jan 13, 2022

***Health care settings to be considered are locations where a high number of patients are immunocompromised (e.g., dialysis clinics, outpatient chemotherapy clinics, transplant clinics). If the employer is not directing return to work in their setting, health care workers should assess their practice settings to consider the risks and benefits of returning to work after 5 days of isolation if it means it could lead to multiple high-risk individuals (as defined above) being infected due to the small risk of still transmitting the virus.

In general, most community settings would not be considered highest-risk (e.g., dental, optometry).

Child-care facilities including schools are not considered 'highest risk' unless they are a congregate living setting and/or are associated with a health care environment for immunocompromised or otherwise medically complex individuals (e.g., respite care).

Do your household members need to self-isolate?

Yes, your household members also need to self-isolate for:

- **10 days** if they are 12 years of age and older and partially vaccinated or unvaccinated.
- **10 days** if they are immune compromised, regardless of age or vaccination status.
- **5 days** if they are fully vaccinated or are 11 years of age or younger.

They should continue to self-monitor for symptoms for 10 days and **if they have or develop symptoms** they should continue to self-isolate (until symptoms have been improving for 24 hours or 48 hours if gastrointestinal symptoms) and get [tested](#) if they are eligible.

Non-household high-risk contacts

A [high-risk contact](#) is any individual who has been in close contact with someone who tested positive for COVID-19 during the period that the person can pass on the virus to others (period of communicability). A person's period of communicability is — **48 hours before their first symptom started, or 48 hours before their test date (if they have no symptoms) — until their self-isolation period has ended.**

[Close contact](#) is being within 2 metres (6 feet) for a prolonged time or having multiple close encounters to an individual who tested positive for COVID-19, even when both people are wearing a mask. Other examples of high-risk situations include:

- Physical contact such as shaking someone's hand, hugging, kissing, being sneezed or coughed on
- Living in the same household (this excludes individuals who live in a completely separate unit such as a self-contained basement apartment)
- Providing care to someone (e.g., taking care of an elderly parent)

Your high-risk contacts may be required to self-isolate depending on their vaccination status for either 5 or 10 days from their last contact with you. Refer them to the *High-Risk Contact Letter* for more information on when high-risk contacts must self-isolate.

What to Tell your High-Risk Contacts:

- ✓ Please share the *High-Risk Contact Letter* (attached) with your high-risk contacts.
- ✓ Let your high-risk contacts know that they may need to self-isolate for either 5 or 10 days from their last contact with you.
- ✓ Direct them to the OPH website (ottawapublichealth.ca/covid19instructions) for more information about self-isolating and testing.
- ✓ Tell your employer or any place you volunteer so they can let your high-risk contacts know they may need to self-isolate and to go for testing. Remind them it is your right to remain anonymous.
- ✓ If your child is positive for COVID-19, notify their high-risk contacts by sending them the *High-Risk Contact Letter* (attached). Please note that school exposures are generally not considered high-risk if appropriate precautions were maintained (e.g., wearing masks), however, if your child discloses that they did not maintain precautions with an individual, we advise you to notify them.

You are not alone. If you need help, reach out

If your symptoms are not manageable at home, seek medical care. You can be seen by a doctor at a COVID-19 Care Clinic where they can do chest X-Rays, blood work, and prescribe medications. [Book an appointment](#) online or by calling them.

Clinic information and hours can be found on our [COVID-19 Testing Information](#) page.

Important: COVID-19 symptoms can get worse quickly. If this happens, **don't wait to seek medical care**. It is ok to break isolation for this. If you are having difficulty breathing, shortness of breath at rest, chest pain, or fainting, **call 9-1-1**.

When seeking medical attention for non-emergency situations: Please use a private vehicle for transportation and avoid using public transit. If you don't have access to a private vehicle, please use a taxi or rideshare, wear a mask, sit in the rear seat on the opposite side of the driver and open the windows (weather permitting).

It's okay to not be okay. People have loved ones in hospital, many businesses are fighting to keep their doors open, children and adolescents are struggling with online learning and social isolation, and essential workers are exhausted. If you or your loved one are struggling with overwhelming sadness, anxiety, loneliness, or anger, reach out for help by calling your family doctor or a mental health professional.

If you need immediate help, call:

- The Ottawa Distress Line/ Help Line at 613-238-3311 or
- The Mental Health Crisis Line at 613-722-6914

Last updated: Jan 13, 2022

For further information on community resources available to you, please see the attached list. We are happy to answer any questions or concerns you may have, please don't hesitate to call us.

Ottawa Public Health thanks you for following the COVID-19 instructions to keep your community safe.

Sincerely,

The COVID-19 Case Management Team
Ottawa Public Health

Last updated: Jan 13, 2022