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 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](https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/coronavirus-covid-19/COVID19InCanada.html). This is the law and you can find more information about the [Class Order](https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/coronavirus-covid-19/class-order.html) on the OPH website: [www.ottawapublichealth.ca/covid19instructions](https://www.ottawapublichealth.ca/covid19instructions). We appreciate your part in helping to slow 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 limit 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 if you have no fever, and if you have had improvement in your symptoms for 24 hours (48 hours for gastrointestinal symptoms). Absence of a cough is not required. This means you can leave the house even if other household members continue to self-isolate. It is normal to have fatigue and congestion after isolation is complete. 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 test positive for COVID-19 and experience severe illness self-isolate for 20 days. Severe illness means you were admitted to the intensive care unit (ICU) or are severely immune-compromised (such as receiving chemotherapy for cancer treatment or taking prednisone, or other immune-suppressive medication). You may end self-isolation after this period, provided that you have no fever (without the use of fever-reducing medications) and symptoms are improving for at least 24 hours (48 hours for gastrointestinal symptoms).

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 for 10 full days from their last contact with you. If there is ongoing contact (e.g., parent to a young child) the high-risk contact’s isolation period in some cases may be 10 days from the last day of your self-isolation period. Refer to the High-Risk Contact Letter for more information on when high-risk contacts must self-isolate.
OPH recommends all your high-risk contacts without symptoms (regardless of vaccination status) go for PCR testing 7 days after their last contact with you, or immediately if they have or develop symptoms. Household contacts who have had ongoing contact (e.g., parent to a young child) with you should go for testing 7 days after you developed symptoms, or 7 days after your positive test date if you have no symptoms.

With the increase in people testing positive, our testing centres are extremely busy. It may take more time for your contacts to book an appointment and receive their test results. If they have symptoms of COVID-19 and are not able to access PCR testing, or if they have had a positive rapid antigen test, please assume they are positive. They must self-isolate for 10 days from the day their symptoms started and tell their household members to self-isolate for 10 days from their last contact with them.

**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 10 days from their last contact with you.
- Recommend that they go for testing as described above.
- Direct them to the OPH website ([ottawapublichealth.ca/covid19instructions](https://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 your child’s school. The school will notify your child’s high-risk contacts and ask them to self-isolate. Your child’s identity will be kept confidential.
- If anyone in your family are high-risk contacts and attend elementary/secondary school, please fill out this form: [Household Contacts Who Attend School](https://www.ottawapublichealth.ca/hcp/covid19/instructions/hcp-contact-letter-school). If you work at or attend a post-secondary institution, please complete the [Post-secondary Institution Case Intake Form](https://www.ottawapublichealth.ca/hcp/covid19/instructions/hcp-contact-letter-school) to help with contact tracing.

**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](https://www.ottawapublichealth.ca/hcp/covid19/instructions/hcp-contact-letter-school) online or by calling them.

Clinic information and hours can be found on our [COVID-19 Testing Information](https://www.ottawapublichealth.ca/hcp/covid19/instructions/hcp-contact-letter-school) 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

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