

Subject: COVID-19 Exposure

Dear Client,

**You have been exposed to an individual who has tested positive for COVID-19.**

This means you are a close contact, and you **may** need to **self-isolate**. Please be aware that you will **not** receive a call from Ottawa Public Health.

### **Who is a close contact?**

A **close contact** is someone who was in close contact with a person who had symptoms or tested positive for COVID-19 during the time they could transmit 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 two meters (six feet) of a person who had symptoms or tested positive for COVID-19 for more than a brief encounter or having multiple close encounters, without adequate protection. Other examples of close contact 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).

### **Do I Need to Isolate?**

**If you have symptoms** of COVID-19, you should self-isolate until your symptoms have been improving for at least 24 hours (or 48 hours if gastrointestinal symptoms such as vomiting or diarrhea) **AND** you do not have a fever. More information can be found on

[OttawaPublicHealth.ca/COVID19Instructions](https://OttawaPublicHealth.ca/COVID19Instructions).

If you do not have symptoms, follow the self-isolation table below.

Scenario	Isolation Period	Additional Precautions
<p>Close contacts who DO NOT live in a <b>highest risk setting*</b></p>	<p>You are not required to self-isolate if you do not have symptoms.</p> <p>If you develop symptoms of COVID-19, follow the self-isolation guidelines for individuals who have symptoms.</p>	<p>For a total of 10 days after the last contact with the person who has symptoms or tested positive for COVID-19 (on a PCR or RAT), you should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self-monitor for symptoms and self-isolate immediately if you develop any symptom of COVID-19. <a href="#">Follow the instructions above if you have tested positive on a PCR or rapid antigen test or have symptoms of COVID-19.</a></li> <li>• Continue to wear a well-fitted mask in all public settings               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Wear a mask as much as possible in public settings (including school and child care, unless under 2 years old). Exceptions would include removing the mask temporarily for essential activities like eating (e.g., when eating in shared space at school/work while maintaining as much distance from others as possible).</li> <li>○ You can participate in activities where a mask is worn, but you should avoid non-essential activities where removing the mask would be necessary (e.g., dining out, playing a wind instrument, high contact sports where masks cannot be safely worn).</li> <li>○ People who are exempt from masking (e.g., children under two years of age, etc.) may return to public settings without wearing a mask</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Not visit anyone who is immunocompromised or at higher risk of illness (i.e., seniors).</li> <li>• Avoid non-essential visits to any <a href="#">highest risk settings</a>.</li> <li>• Employees working in <a href="#">highest risk settings</a> should report their exposure and follow their workplace guidance.</li> </ul>
<p>Close contacts who live in a <b>highest risk setting*</b></p>	<p>You should follow the self-isolation guidelines of the highest risk setting*. Speak to your facility operator.</p> <p>If you develop symptoms of COVID-19, follow the self-isolation guidelines for individuals who have symptoms.</p>	

\*Highest risk settings include:

- Acute care settings such as hospitals, including complex continuing care facilities.
- Congregate living settings, including, Long-Term Care, retirement homes, First Nation elder care lodges, group homes, shelters, hospices, correctional institutions and hospital schools.
- Employer-provided living settings of international agricultural workers.

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## Testing

Only go for testing if you are eligible. See our testing webpage for testing criteria and testing site hours: [OttawaPublicHealth.ca/COVIDtesting](https://ottawapublichealth.ca/COVIDtesting).

If you go for PCR testing, you will receive instructions on how to access your results from the Assessment Centre when you get tested. You may also visit the province of Ontario's website to access COVID-19 test results: <https://covid19results.ehealthontario.ca:4443/agree>. If you tested positive, the variant of concern result will take a few days to show up.

## How do you self-isolate, if required?

- Stay at home.
- 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 (this includes vaccination appointments) until your self-isolation period is over.
- 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.
- You may leave your home for outdoor exercise by yourself or with a caregiver. You should maintain physical distance of at least 2 metres (6 feet) from others at all times and wear a mask in common areas when leaving if you live in an apartment building, condo, or hotel. Do not go to outdoor fitness classes or personal training sessions.

## How do you limit the spread of COVID-19 in your household?

- If possible, use your own bedroom and bathroom.
- 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 away from others. Use your own cutlery, plate, and glass.
- Physically distance (6 feet) and limit your time with others as much as possible.
- Wear a mask when close contact with others is unavoidable, even when outside.
- Disinfect areas you touch and that others may come in contact with, such as fridge and kitchen cupboard handles.

## 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: [OttawaPublicHealth.ca/COVIDtesting](https://ottawapublichealth.ca/COVIDtesting).

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**If you are in distress, go to the nearest Emergency Department or call 9-1-1** (experiencing significant trouble breathing, chest pain, fainting, or have significant worsening of any chronic disease symptoms). It is okay to break isolation in order to seek urgent medical care.

Note that urgent medical care includes babies under 3 months of age with a fever who should be seen by CHEO or the nearest emergency department. Be sure to tell the hospital you are COVID-19 positive or isolating due to symptoms or recent close contact. For non-emergency situations where you need medical help, visit a COVID-19 Care Clinic.

Isolation may also be broken to attend essential medical appointments with a healthcare professional that cannot be delayed, such as attending appointments for newborns 24-72 hours after discharge from hospital. Please discuss this with your healthcare provider.

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. Our operating hours are Monday to Friday 8:30 am to 4:30 pm. If you are in need of immediate medical assistance, call 9-1-1.

This letter is issued by Ottawa Public Health to a person who has tested positive for COVID-19 to share with their close contacts. In general, Ottawa Public Health does not dismiss cohorts in group settings, and as such, this letter is not used for this purpose.

We thank you for following the COVID-19 instructions to keep your community safe.

Sincerely,

Ottawa Public Health

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