



**Date:**

Oct. 13, 2020

**Memo**

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**Title:** COVID-19 Testing Supports

**To:** Assessment Centres

**From:** Ontario Health

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Thank you for your continued leadership and support, working with the Province, as we continue to advance the provincial testing strategy to improve access and timeliness of results for COVID-19 testing. To support recent developments in moving to schedule-based systems and implement new testing guidance, please see below next steps for action.

1. As you are now on schedule-based systems, please provide your website and / or phone number to your regional assessment centre leads. This information will be put on the Provincial website. If you need assistance in setting up these systems, please contact [COVIDAssessmentCentres@ontariohealth.ca](mailto:COVIDAssessmentCentres@ontariohealth.ca).
2. Please ensure accurate and daily data reporting to the Daily Bed Census tool. In particular, the “swabs used” data point is meant to capture all COVID-19 tests completed (i.e. specimens collected). This is critical to ensuring optimal lab routing. Additionally, future reimbursement will be based on this reporting.
3. All assessment centres must report any additional COVID-19 testing activity requested of them outside of the respective assessment centre. This activity must be approved by Ontario Health Regional Leads and data tracking must be established. This is imperative to informing optimal lab routing and to also ensure future reimbursement. Please report this activity to your respective Ontario Health regional teams.
4. To assist you in communicating the most recent testing guidance to Ontarians, please see the appended key messages that you can post on your website. We will continue to provide you with updated key messages weekly, or as guidance is released.

## **Appendix: Key messages for posting on websites**

### **What's New**

We are currently experiencing a high volume of demand for COVID-19 testing. Please:

- First determine if you require a COVID-19 test by completing a [self-assessment](#)
- Do not seek testing at multiple COVID-19 assessment centres as this will result in delayed access and delayed test results for all. If you have already booked an appointment at an assessment centre and can no longer make it, please cancel and rebook your time so others who need a test can be seen.

This is important to ensuring those in need can receive timely access to testing and timely access to test results.

As of Tuesday, October 6, you will need an appointment to get a test at all assessment centres. Prior to booking your appointment with us, please review the eligibility information below.

### **Who should be tested at a COVID-19 assessment centre?**

**Based on the Ontario Government's current COVID-19 testing guidelines, we are assessing individuals for COVID-19 testing based on the following:**

#### **1. Individuals with [symptoms of COVID-19](#)\***

#### **2. Direct contacts of confirmed COVID-19 cases\*\* identified as:**

- **A household contact (note this does not include contacts of contacts such as a friend of someone in your household)**
- **Directed or recommended by public health via contact tracing or outbreak investigation**
- **Notified via the COVID Alert app**

In addition, the following groups are eligible for testing at assessment centres regardless of the presence of symptoms. Currently, these are:

- Workers in long-term care homes every two weeks. Workers in long-term care homes should not be tested more frequently than every two weeks unless directed by public health in an outbreak setting.
- Essential caregivers visiting a long-term care home
- Residents or workers in homeless shelters, or other congregate settings. A list of congregate settings is outlined in [guidance from the Ministry of Health](#).
- Pre-operative patients prior to receiving general anaesthesia and cancer patients receiving therapy as outlined in [guidance from the Ministry of Health](#).
- International students who have passed their 14-day quarantine period, or who have developed symptoms within their 14-day period (breaking quarantine to get a test is not encouraged but assessment centres will not turn symptomatic individuals away).
- Farm workers
- Indigenous communities
- Individuals who need testing for international travel clearance (note: this is an interim measure. Please check [Ontario.ca/covidtest](https://Ontario.ca/covidtest) to ensure you have the most current information).

Groups of people who are eligible for testing at assessment centres regardless of their symptoms may change from time to time. You should confirm your eligibility for a COVID-19 test with your health care provider before seeking testing.

\*Children are eligible for testing when they fulfill the following symptoms:

- Are recommended for testing by the local public health unit
- Are exhibiting new/worsening symptoms of:
  - Fever and/or chills
  - Cough
  - Shortness of breath
  - Decrease or loss of smell or taste
- Exhibiting 2 or more of the following new/worsening symptoms:
  - Sore throat
  - Runny/Stuffiness nose
  - Headache
  - Nausea/Vomiting/Diarrhea
  - Fatigue, lethargy, muscle aches or malaise
- You must screen for COVID-19 every day before going to school/ child care. Use the [school screening tool](#) to help make this decision.

\*\*If an asymptomatic close contact tests negative, they must remain in self-isolation for 14 days from their last exposure to the case. If they later become symptomatic within the isolation period, they should be re-tested.

The only exception is if the individual was alerted to a possible exposure by the COVID Alert app, then they must isolate until they receive their test results. If the results are negative, they are required to self-monitor for 14 days from when they received the alert. If they later become symptomatic within the isolation period, they should be re-tested and self-isolate until they receive their test results.

### **Examples of who would not be eligible for testing**

Please note, the following are examples of individuals do not meet testing eligibility criteria:

- Asymptomatic individuals seeking workplace testing outside of outbreak investigations or government requirements
- Other members of the family that do not fit the current COVID-19 testing guidance (those without eligible symptoms or who are not a contact of a confirmed COVID-19 case).
- Asymptomatic close contacts of an individual with symptoms compatible with COVID-19, unless the individual is confirmed as COVID-19 infected
- Asymptomatic contacts of case contacts (close contacts of an individual who is a contact of a confirmed case of COVID-19, unless the individual is confirmed as COVID-19 infected)
- Asymptomatic sports team member testing unless referred by public health

### **When visiting a COVID-19 assessment centre**

When visiting the COVID-19 assessment centre, please follow public health measures, including wearing a face covering and maintain physical distance from people outside your household or social circle.