

IMPORTANT UPDATES ON COVID-19

To: Physicians, Nurse Practitioners, Nurses, Midwives
Hospital Infection Control Departments and Emergency Departments

This bulletin contains a few updates on topics of interest.

As the province starts to lighten restrictions, it is very important that we maintain a high level of vigilance for cases. We need to continue to encourage anyone with COVID related symptoms to get tested. One of the barriers to testing is the direction that anyone with viral symptoms, irrespective of test results, should self-isolate for 14 days. We are altering our direction on this with emphasis on the following messaging:

- It is essential that a person self-isolate while the swab is pending;
- Household contacts of a patient who is swabbed also need to self-isolate while the swab is pending;
- If you have had high risk direct exposure to a positive case, 14 days of self-isolation is necessary, irrespective of swab results;
- **If the swab is negative, and the patient does not have a high risk direct exposure, the patient may return to work 24 hours after symptom resolution;**
- Consider re-testing a patient if symptoms worsen.

One of the gaps in our region is access to testing of symptomatic people who have transportation barriers. The Centre de santé communautaire du Témiskaming has kindly stepped up to fill this gap by offering RN services to go into a patient's home to swab. Note, this service should be considered as the last resort. All referrals for mobile testing, whether they are done through CSCT or a FHT, will be coordinated by THU and we ask that you please call the COVID line to access this service. This service may be available on weekends for urgent cases.

The list of COVID-19 symptoms has been updated with the addition of **Multisystem inflammatory vasculitis in children**. The updated list is attached.

Another update on the yellow-topped COVID swabs:

- As per [PHOL COVID Testing Index](#), it is recommended to use either swab provided in ROCHE "yellow top" COBAS Kit as deep nasal swabs. The thinner swab can be utilized for nasopharyngeal collection, but does carry a safety concern/risk of breaking during usage. Thus the recommendation/preference remains for either swab within the kit to be utilized as deep nasal. For further information on COVID specimen collection, please refer to the [PHOL COVID Testing Index](#).

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact your local Timiskaming Health Unit:

Monday to Friday
8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

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