

IMPORTANT UPDATES ON COVID-19

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

This document is an update to the April 14 alert. The referenced ministry documents are not yet available to hyperlink, hence they are attached as a hard copy.

Updated Guidance on Testing

The guidance document was updated again and contains many important descriptions. Points of interest include:

- The definition of fever of 37.8 C or more now applies to all patient groups.
- Priority groups for testing has been expanded to include:
 - HCW/First responder family members (which we had already recommended);
 - Priority populations (chemotherapy, newborns, pregnant, dialysis and transplant patients);
 - Federal cross-border workers (eg: International truck drivers);
 - Residents and staff of congregate living situations (eg: group homes, day care for essential workers).

Atypical presentations of COVID-19 should be considered, particularly in children, older persons, and people living with a developmental disability. For a list of potential atypical symptoms, please see page 2.

Regional Assessment Centres and Surveillance Program

RACs will not be running over the weekend. All high priority groups should continue to be tested after hours or on weekends. Testing other groups as per the surveillance program can be continued after-hours at the discretion of the Emergency Room physician.

Note, if a primary care provider screens a patient for testing they may still do the swab themselves or they may refer **directly** to the RACs by faxing the assessment form to the RAC for a swab to be booked. Please still fax a copy of the assessment form to THU noting directly referred for testing. Fax numbers for the RACs are (705) 647-8127 for the south, (705) 568-2115 for central and north patients.

Other Points of Interest

There have been ongoing issues in swab results coming to THU. We are requesting that all swabs be copied to Dr Glenn Corneil, MOH Timiskaming Health Unit – thanks for your help with this.

Please call THU if a patient with significant concern for COVID-19 is admitted so we can consider initiating self-isolation of family members pending swab results.

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.

New Liskeard

Tel: (705) 647-4305
Toll Free: (866) 747-4305
Fax: (705) 647-5779

Kirkland Lake

Tel: (705) 567-9355
Toll Free: (866) 967-9355
Fax: (705) 567-5476

After-Hours or Weekend
On-Call Number
(705) 647-3033

www.timiskaminghu.com

HEALTHCARE PROVIDER ALERT

April 17, 2020

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

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8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

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Tel: (705) 647-4305
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There have been a number of requests to know specificity and sensitivity of NP swabs. PHOL is actively studying this to try to determine Ontario's rates. Until sensitivity is better defined, the recommendation is to consider repeating a COVID swab for negative patients of concern, ie: worsening condition, symptoms of concern, etc.

There is an updated public health guidance document with multiple new directions for households containing a COVID positive persons including how to support maintenance of breastfeeding, care for pets, etc. Please call THU if any questions arise on these topics noting THU staff call positive patients daily until the case meets resolved criteria.

The quick reference guidance for testing and clearance was updated again this morning. Highlights include **tightening of the return to work for HCWs**, see page 3 of this document as attached.

Attached is the updated screening form. Please dispose of all the old screening forms.

Atypical Symptoms/Signs of COVID-19

Symptoms

- Unexplained fatigue/malaise
- Delirium (acutely altered mental status and inattention)
- Falls
- Acute functional decline
- Exacerbation of chronic conditions
- Chills
- Headaches
- Croup

Signs

- Unexplained tachycardia, including age specific tachycardia for children
- Decrease in blood pressure
- Unexplained hypoxia (even if mild i.e. O2 sat <90%)
- Lethargy, difficulty feeding in infants (if no other diagnosis)