

COVID-19: Updated Guidance for Physicians and Patients

Key Points:

- The time required for self-isolation of **cases** (confirmed or clinical) whose symptoms have resolved has been reduced to **10 days** from onset of symptoms (infectious period)
- The time required for self-isolation of **contacts** or **returning travellers** remains at **14 days** (incubation period)
- Patients with mild respiratory symptoms **should not be tested**. Instruct them to self-isolate at home for **10 days** and seek healthcare if respiratory symptoms worsen.
- **A test of cure is no longer required**. Cases may return to their routine activities **10 days** after symptom onset if their symptoms, other than cough, have resolved. Chronic cough may persist for a few weeks but cases are no longer infectious to others.

Testing Guidance:

Who should be tested for COVID-19?	Who does not need to be tested for Covid-19?
<p>Patients with respiratory symptoms who are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Hospitalized, or likely to be hospitalized, including pregnant women in their 3rd trimester 2. Health Care Workers 3. Residents of long term care facilities 4. Part of an investigation of a cluster or outbreak (this testing will be organized by Public Health) <p><i>To prioritize testing label the requisition as coming from:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hospital (label as <u>HOSP</u>) • Long-term care facility (label as <u>LTCF</u>) • Health Care Worker (label as <u>HCW</u>) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Patients without symptoms 2. Patients with mild respiratory symptoms, who can be managed at home. This includes returning travellers with an onset of illness within 14 days of return to Canada. <p>Note that COVID-19 presents as a mild illness in the majority of patients and testing does not change management.</p>

Please advise patients, with or without a history of travel, who have mild respiratory symptoms that can be managed at home, to self-isolate at home for 10 days after the initial onset of their symptoms.

After 10 days, if their temperature is normal and they feel well, they can return to their routine activities. Coughing may persist for several weeks, so a cough alone does not mean they need to continue to self-isolate beyond 10 days. On day 10, if patients continue to have symptoms other than a cough, advise them to continue self-isolating until symptoms have resolved. Advise patients to seek medical care if respiratory symptoms worsen.

Returning travellers who develop respiratory symptoms within 14 days of return will be considered "Clinical COVID-19" cases and their contacts managed in the same way as laboratory confirmed cases.

You can reach a Medical Health Officer at 604.675.3900 Toll free at 1.855.675.3900
For public health emergencies after hours contact the Medical Health Officer on call at 604.527.4893

Vancouver Coastal Health Medical Health Officers

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To receive Physicians' Updates by email please contact us at: <mailto:VCHPhysiciansUpdate@vch.ca>

What about household contacts of a confirmed or clinical COVID-19 case who is self-isolating?

People who live in the same household as a confirmed or clinical COVID-19 case who is self-isolating are at higher risk of having been exposed. We are asking household contacts of these cases to self-isolate at home for 14 days (the full length of the incubation period). As much as possible, patients should be advised to distance themselves from their household contacts (e.g. stay in separate rooms, sleep in separate beds and use separate bathrooms, if possible).

If household contacts develop mild symptoms that can be managed at home, they are asked to continue self-isolating at home for 10 days after their initial symptom onset. Advise patients to seek medical care if respiratory symptoms worsen.

For all patients tested:

- Offer them a surgical mask and place them in a separate room.
- Please collect a **nasopharyngeal swab**. Throat swabs are now discouraged.
- When obtaining a swab, ensure that you wear, at a minimum, a surgical mask and eye protection.
- If results are positive, VCH Public Health will be notified immediately and will follow up directly with the patient and any contacts, as appropriate.

Given the global swab and collection media shortage, use either the routine Copan NP swabs used for Influenza or other respiratory virus testing, or the skin/mucosal swabs for HSV/VZV viral testing (the containers have a pink liquid in it and a red or blue cap).



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