



**UHN Occupational Health (OH) Toolkit  
for COVID-19**

**Updated September 18, 2020**

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## Background

On December 31, 2019, a cluster of cases of pneumonia was reported in Wuhan, China, and the cause has been confirmed as a new coronavirus not previously been previously identified in humans. This virus is now known as the SARS-CoV-2 and the infection it causes, the 2019 Novel Coronavirus infection or COVID-19.

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses, some that cause illness in people and others that cause illness in animals. Human coronaviruses are common and are typically associated with mild illnesses, similar to the common cold. However, a couple of human coronaviruses (SARS, MERS) can cause more severe illness.

The characteristics of this novel coronavirus are not all clear yet as it is early in our understanding. Our focus currently is to rapidly identify anyone who may be infected with the novel coronavirus and ensure their safety, as well as the safety of other UHN staff and patients.

## Purpose

The purposes of these guidelines are to:

1. Provide direction to OH for preventing and managing infections among health care workers (HCWs).
2. Prevent the transmission of COVID-19 at UHN.

**This is an evolving situation. These guidelines are subject to update as new information and protocols are received.**

This guidance document is not intended to take the place of medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment.

## Applicability

This protocol applies to all individuals carrying out activities in the hospital, including but not limited to all HCWs including physicians, nurses, contract workers, students, post-graduate medical trainees, researchers and volunteers. This protocol does not apply to patients or visitors.

## Occupational Health Contact information

**COVID Hotline** can be used for any COVID-19 related questions. To request a consult from the COVID hotline, **visit** <https://forms.uhn.ca/PublicForms/Form/Covid19Hotline>, or call 416.340.3556 if you are unable to submit an online form.

## Case Definition for HCW Surveillance (possible COVID-19 testing)

Suspect case of COVID-19: HCW presents with any of the following symptoms:

- fever
- new onset of cough
- worsening chronic cough
- shortness of breath
- sore throat
- difficulty swallowing
- chills
- unexplained headaches
- eye pain or conjunctivitis
- nausea or vomiting
- diarrhea
- abdominal pain
- unexplained muscle or joint pain
- severe fatigue or weakness
- runny nose or congestion with no other cause i.e. allergies
- loss of taste and/or smell

## Pregnant or breastfeeding HCWs

Pregnant or breastfeeding HCWs will not be expected to care for suspected or confirmed patients with COVID-19.

## Travel Surveillance Screening Guidelines

To limit the spread of COVID-19, the Government of Canada advises against all non-essential travel outside of Canada until further notice. For more information, please visit <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/latest-travel-health-advice.html> and <https://www.ontario.ca/page/covid-19-stop-spread>

In keeping with the federal Order, *Minimizing the Risk of Exposure to COVID-19 in Canada Order (Mandatory Isolation)* No. 3. HCWs who have traveled outside of Canada **must quarantine for 14 days from the date of return**. They must notify their manager of estimated date of return to work.

If symptoms develop during the 14 days after returning from travel outside of Canada, the HCW must notify OH.

Travel history does not need to be reported to OH at this time.

Interprovincial travel restrictions are based on individual provinces. Currently, there are no interprovincial travel restrictions issued by the Province of Ontario.

Please visit the [Government of Canada's](#) website for travel advice and the [Ministry of Health](#) website for updated information.

## Testing

Testing of symptomatic HCWs will be coordinated by OH with the following guidelines:

1. HCWs who develop symptoms while at work should:
  - Ensure mask remains donned
  - Perform hand hygiene
  - Call the closest OH Clinic – you may be tested for COVID-19 upon OH assessment.
2. HCWs considered exposed who develop symptoms **outside** of the workplace should **stay home** and call their local OH department.

OH conducts COVID-19 testing for UHN employees. The testing schedule can be found at <http://documents.uhn.ca/sites/UHN/Pandemic/COVID-19/OHS/Testing-Centres-Overview.pdf>.

In certain circumstances, for example for outbreak or cluster investigation or for point prevalence surveillance, asymptomatic testing of HCWs will be offered by OH. This will be directed by the OH leadership.

HCW who have tested positive for COVID-19 in the past should not be retested if they are within 90 days from the positive result.

COVID-19 Assessment Centers are also an option for anyone interested in asymptomatic testing. For information on testing centre locations, please visit <https://covid-19.ontario.ca/assessment-centre-locations/>. Positive test results from other testing locations must be reported to OH immediately.

## Occupational Exposure

An occupational exposure may have occurred when a HCW had unprotected close contact with:

1. An **asymptomatic** individual who has been diagnosed with COVID-19 infection and the HCW has been in close contact<sup>1</sup> within 14 days prior to the COVID-19 positive individual's test date.
2. A **symptomatic** individual who has been diagnosed with COVID-19 infection and the HCW has been in close contact<sup>1</sup> within 48 hours prior to the COVID-19 positive individual's symptom onset.

<sup>1</sup>Criteria for Close Contact:

1. Unprotected contact within 2 metres of an individual with COVID-19 infection for more than 15 minutes (cumulative or consecutive)
- OR**
2. Unprotected contact with respiratory secretions or fecal matter from an individual with COVID-19 infection.

An asymptomatic HCW who meets the close contact criteria for contact with an individual who is: 1) symptomatic and 2) has a pending COVID-19 test result, **must self-isolate** until the result is received. At this time, the HCW must contact OH with the results for return to work assessment.

Guidelines may differ for confirmed outbreaks, please contact OH for guidance.

## **Classification of Occupational Exposure Risks (see Table 1)**

### **High Risk Exposure:**

1. Unprotected, close contact with an individual with COVID-19 infection who is NOT wearing a facemask (i.e. neither exposed HCW nor COVID-19+ individual is wearing a mask).
2. Close contact with COVID-19+ individual who was NOT wearing a facemask, while exposed HCW was wearing a facemask or respirator (but no eye protection, gloves or gown).
3. HCW wore gown, gloves, eye protection and facemask (but not N95 respirator) during AGMP.
4. HCW wore N95, gown and gloves but NOT eye protection during AGMP
5. HCW wore N95 and eye protection but NOT gloves and gown during AGMP
6. HCW present in the room during an aerosol-generating medical procedure (AGMP) on a COVID-19 individual, and did NOT use N95 respirator, facemask or eye protection (any of these PPE components are missing – i.e. any of eyes, nose or mouth not protected).
- 7.

### **Low Risk Exposure:**

1. Unprotected interaction with COVID-19 + individual (i.e. no use of PPE but NOT meeting criteria for close contact due to duration and nature of contact)
2. Unprotected, close contact with a COVID-19+ individual who was wearing a facemask (i.e. exposed HCW wore no mask or eye protection, but COVID-19 + individual wore a mask)
3. Close contact with COVID-19+ individual who was wearing a facemask while exposed HCW was also wearing a facemask or respirator (but no eye protection, gloves or gown)

**Table 1**

HCW Personal Protective Equipment	Interaction	
	COVID-19 Positive Individual with Facemask	COVID-19 Positive Individual without Facemask
<b>No PPE</b>	Low	High
<b>No respiratory protection</b> (i.e. no facemask or respirator)	Low	High
<b>No eye protection</b> (i.e. no goggles or face shield)	Low	High
<b>No gloves and no gown</b>	Low	Low

### Aerosol Generating Medical Procedures (AGMPs):

For the IPAC Recommendations for Management of Aerosol Generating Medical Procedures, follow this link: [http://documents.uhn.ca/sites/UHN/Pandemic/COVID-19/ClinicalProtocols/AGMP\\_Guidance\\_Document.pdf](http://documents.uhn.ca/sites/UHN/Pandemic/COVID-19/ClinicalProtocols/AGMP_Guidance_Document.pdf)

HCW Personal Protective Equipment	Presence in the room during an AGMP**
<b>None</b>	High
<b>No respiratory protection (i.e. no facemask or respirator)</b>	High
<b>Facemask (not N95 respirator)</b>	High
<b>No eye protection (i.e. no goggles or face shield)</b>	High
<b>No gown or gloves</b>	High

For more information on Perioperative Intubations, please visit:

[https://intranet.remote.uhn.ca/cvpn/30sPbufnL50nt79sf3gJQffVCKto9X8/sites/UHN/Surgical\\_Services/COVID-19/Algorithm%20COVID-19%20Surgery.pdf](https://intranet.remote.uhn.ca/cvpn/30sPbufnL50nt79sf3gJQffVCKto9X8/sites/UHN/Surgical_Services/COVID-19/Algorithm%20COVID-19%20Surgery.pdf)

## Reporting of Occupationally Acquired Infections

In accordance with the Occupational Health and Safety Act and its regulations, an employer must provide written notice within 4 days of being advised that a worker has an occupational illness. This includes an occupationally-acquired infection, and/or a Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) claim that must be filed by or on behalf of the worker with respect to an occupational illness, including an occupational infection, to the:

- Ministry of Labour,
- Joint Health and Safety Committee (or health and safety representative),
- Union Partners (if applicable).

Occupationally-acquired infections and illnesses are reportable to the WSIB.

## Work Restrictions after Occupational Exposure

1. **High Risk Exposure:** HCW self-isolates at home for 14 days from the first day following their last exposure monitoring for COVID-19 symptoms.
2. **Low Risk Exposure:** HCW can continue to work, but must self-monitor for symptoms.

**If symptoms develop:** Report to OH for further guidance.

## Non-occupational Exposure

A non-occupational exposure may have occurred when a healthcare worker (HCW) has been in close contact with:

1. An **asymptomatic** individual who has been diagnosed with COVID-19 infection within 14 days prior to the COVID-19 positive individual's test date.
2. A **symptomatic** individual who has been diagnosed with COVID-19 infection within 48 hours prior to the COVID-19 positive individual's symptom onset.

## Work Restrictions after Non-Occupational Exposure

1. **If HCW was in close contact with a household member or someone in the community who is a confirmed case of COVID-19:** Quarantine and self-monitor for development of symptoms for 14 days from date of last exposure to individual.
2. **If HCW was in close contact with a household member or someone in the community who is 1) symptomatic and 2) has a pending COVID-19 test result:** Immediately call OH. Quarantine and self-monitor for development of symptoms until you have spoken with OH, or until test results are back.

3. **If HCW was in close contact with a symptomatic household member or someone in the community who was not tested for COVID-19:** Continue to work and self-monitor for symptoms.
4. **If symptoms develop:** HCW must report to OH for further guidance.

## Return to Work (RTW) Clearance

1. **If HCWs tested positive for COVID-19:**
  - **Symptomatic** HCWs will be cleared to RTW if:
    - i. 14 days self-isolation period is completed. Date of **symptoms onset** is considered as day 0.
    - AND**
    - ii. The HCW has full symptom resolution **or** at least significantly better for 72 hours
    - AND**
    - iii. The HCW has been afebrile for 24 hours
  - **Asymptomatic** HCWs will be cleared to RTW if:
    - i. 14 days self-isolation period is completed. **Date of positive test** is considered day 0.
    - AND**
    - ii. HCW remains asymptomatic
  - **Note:** HCWs who have completed their 14 days self-isolation and are **still symptomatic** will be connected with a disability case coordinator for continued follow up
2. **If HCW tested negative for COVID-19:** The HCW can return to work when symptoms resolve or at least significantly better for at least 24h. Once a negative result is acquired and if symptoms continue, HCW will follow regular sick policy.

3. **If HCW's test is indeterminate for COVID-19:**

- HCW must self-isolate until they receive further direction from OH  
**AND**
- HCW may be re-evaluated for symptoms and re-tested for COVID-19 approximately 48 hours from indeterminate test date to determine relevance.

4. **If HCW reports they are unable to report to work due to COVID-19 symptoms and declines to be tested for COVID-19:** OH will notify the HCW's manager and Human Resources that COVID-19 testing was declined (*HCWs are considered high risk for COVID-19*). Next steps will be determined on a case-by-case basis.

If an asymptomatic HCW reports they previously had symptoms which have resolved and did not contact OH while symptomatic the direction is as follows:

- For HCW whose symptoms have been resolved for less than 48 hours, we advise them to be tested for COVID-19.
  - For HCW whose symptoms have been resolved for more than 48 hours can continue to work and monitor themselves for symptoms and do not require a COVID-19 test.
5. Asymptomatic HCW who have a pending COVID-19 test result can continue to work unless otherwise directed by OH.

## COVID-19 and your Child

If your child tests positive for COVID-19, contact the OH COVID-19 team for further instructions.

If your child has been exposed to someone with COVID-19, contact the OH COVID-19 team for further instructions.

## COVID Alert App: Directions for Health Care Worker

UHN Health Care Workers who have been alerted by the app are to continue to work, contact OH, and will have an exposure assessments completed by an OH professional. This assessment will determine the risk level of the HCW.

Health Care Workers are to turn off their App at work.

## Guidance for HCWs that work in multiple facilities

HCWs are allowed to work between UHN and other facilities (including COVID-19 designated units) **EXCEPT** in the case of unit/facility outbreak outside of UHN.

If the HCW works at UHN and another facility and the other facility is on outbreak, the HCW must choose one of the following options:

1. The HCW worked on the outbreak unit prior to the outbreak and chooses UHN as their primary employer; the HCW can only work at UHN until the outbreak is declared over, and no quarantine period is required.
2. The HCW worked on the outbreak location after the outbreak was declared and chooses UHN as their primary employer until the outbreak is declared over; the HCW must be 14 days away from the outbreak institution and remain asymptomatic prior to returning to work at UHN.
3. The HCW chooses the outbreak unit as the primary employer; the HCW can return to UHN if:
  - The outbreak is declared over
  - OR**
  - The HCW has been 14 days away from the outbreak institution and remains asymptomatic

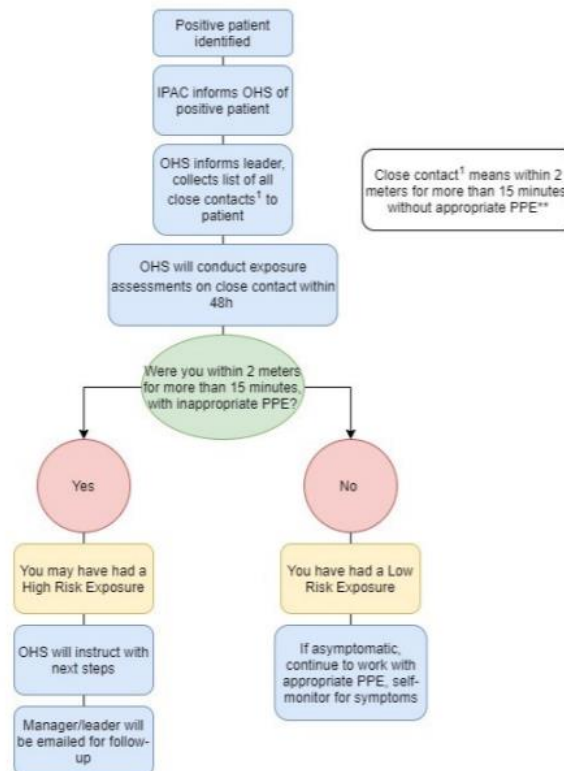
## Prophylaxis for Exposed Individuals

There is no current prophylactic treatment for COVID-19.

## Exposure Process – Positive Patient Pathway

1. Positive patient is identified
2. IPAC informs Occupational Health COVID-19 Centre of positive patient and period of exposure
3. Occupational Health COVID-19 Centre professional sends email to unit manager, asking for any UHN personnel who was within 2 metres of this patient for greater than 15 minutes during the exposure.
4. Occupational Health COVID-19 Centre professionals contact identified staff, review for symptoms, and perform Risk Assessments.
5. If close contacts are considered high risk, they will be followed for Occupational Health COVID-19 Centre until they are safe to return to work.

*What happens when I find out that a patient on my work unit is positive?*



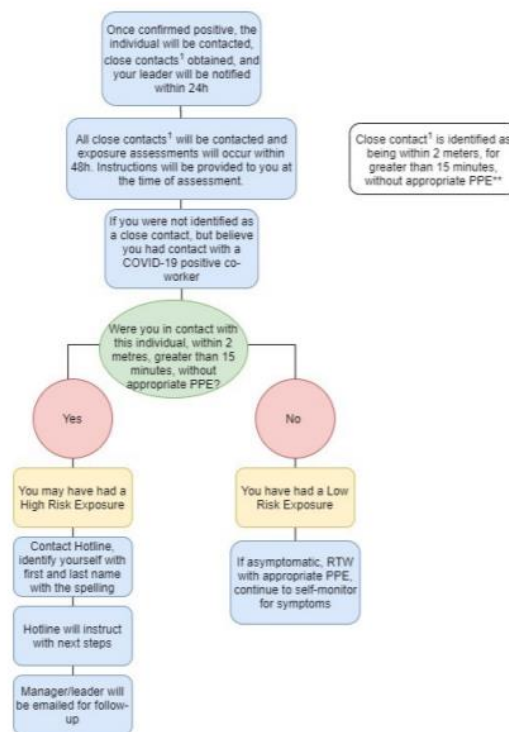
Occupational Health COVID-19 Process Maps  
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## The Positive Employee Process

1. Occupational health COVID-19 Centre is informed of a **positive employee**
2. OH notifies IPAC for patient follow-up.
3. Occupational health COVID-19 professional completes a **COVID+ assessment** on employees, including contact tracing. This is when we **identify close contacts**.
4. Positive employee's manager is made aware of positive employee and is sent a document to share with staff to inform staff that they will be called if they were identified as a close contact. The name of the positive employee will be provided if consent is given.
5. All **close contacts are called** and an **exposure assessment** is completed.
6. Positive employee and staff with High-Risk exposure will be followed by Occupational health COVID-19 Centre until they are safe to return to work.

**\*\*NOTE: if you have a breach in your PPE, call OH for assessment and follow-up\*\***

**What happens when I find out that there is a COVID-19 positive employee/physician/learner on my unit?**



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## Testing Process

Staff can be testing when symptomatic or for asymptomatic surveillance. Staff can be tested at UHN Occupational Health department, or at their local Community Access Center (CAC). CAC Testing centre locations can be found here: <https://covid-19.ontario.ca/assessment-centre-locations/>

If staff is **symptomatic**, staff are required to get tested immediately, self-isolate and contact the UHN OH **COVID Hotline** at **416-340-3556**, or visit <https://forms.uhn.ca/PublicForms/Form/Covid19Hotline>

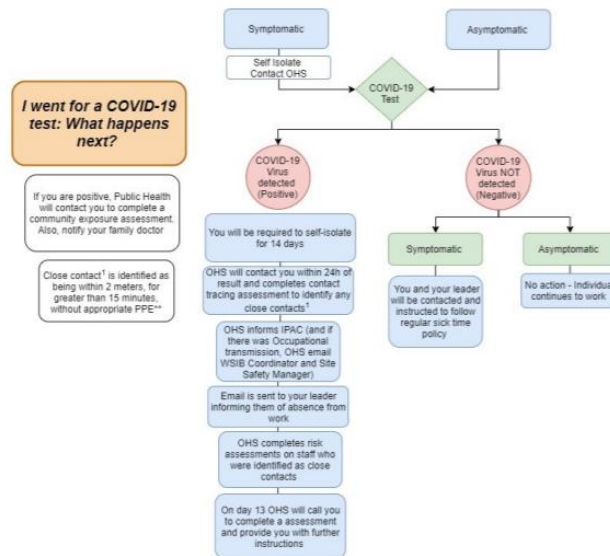
If staff is asymptomatic, return to work after your testing.

If COVID-19 is detected (Positive):

1. Occupational health COVID-19 professional completes a **COVID+ assessment** on employees, including contact tracing. This is when we **identify close contacts**.
2. Positive employee's manager is made aware of positive employee and is sent a document to share with staff to inform staff that they will be called if they were identified as a close contact. The name of the positive employee will be provided if consent is given.
3. All **close contacts are called** and an **exposure assessment** is completed.
4. Positive employee and Staff with High-Risk exposure will be followed by Occupational health COVID-19 Centre until they are safe to return to work.

If COVID-19 is not detected (Negative):

1. Employees are to remain home until they are symptom free, follow regular sick policy.



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## Additional Resources

- [Public Health Ontario Public Resources](#)
- Public Health Agency of Canada's [Public Health Management of Cases and Contacts for COVID-19](#)
- Public Health Agency of Canada's [IPAC for COVID-19: Interim Guidance for Home Care Settings](#)
- Public Health Agency of Canada's [COVID 19: For Health Professionals](#) website
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's [COVID-19 website](#)
- European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control's [COVID-19 website](#)
- Ministry of Health's [COVID-19 website](#)
- Provincial Infectious Diseases Advisory Committee's [Tools for Preparedness: Triage, Screening and Patient Management of Middle East Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus \(MERS-CoV\) Infections in Acute Care Settings](#)
- [Government of Canada's COVID-19 Affected Areas list](#)
- World Health Organization's [Disease Outbreak News website](#), and [COVID-19 website](#)

## References

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