



Information for People who have Symptoms Compatible with COVID-19, OR are a Confirmed Case of COVID-19 via PCR or Rapid Antigen Testing (RAT)

This guidance is for general community members. This guidance does not apply to those who live, work, or volunteer in a highest-risk setting. For general information for those who live or work in highest-risk settings, please view the [Algoma Case and Contact Guide](#).

Step 1: Self-Isolate Immediately

If you have [symptoms compatible with COVID-19](#) or tested positive on a RAT, you do not need to book a PCR test to confirm your results. You are only able to get a PCR test if eligible. Directions are the same for those who have symptoms compatible with COVID-19, test positive on a PCR, rapid molecular, or RAT test.

- If you are [fully vaccinated](#) (with at least two doses of COVID-19 vaccine) **OR** under 12 years old, you **must self-isolate for at least 5 days** from your symptom onset **or** from the date of your positive test result if you have no symptoms. You cannot leave isolation for at least 5 days **AND** until any respiratory symptoms have been improving for 24 hours (or 48 hours for gastrointestinal symptoms) **AND** you do not have a fever.
- If you are age 12 and older and not [fully vaccinated](#) (unvaccinated or partially vaccinated with only 1 dose of COVID-19 vaccine), **OR** immunocompromised, **OR** hospitalized for COVID-19 related illness, you **must self-isolate for 10 days** from symptom onset **or** from the date of your positive test result if you have no symptoms. You cannot leave isolation for at least 10 days **AND** until any respiratory symptoms have been improving for 24 hours (or 48 hours for gastrointestinal symptoms) **AND** you do not have a fever.
- [Self-isolation](#) means you must:
 - Stay home, and isolate away from others in the home as best you can to avoid ongoing exposure.
 - Only leave if it's a medical emergency or if permitted by APH.
 - No visitors unless it's essential (e.g., health care providers).
- If you cannot self-isolate in your home, please call APH at 705-942-4646 ext. 5404.
- Even if self-isolation is complete after 5 days, additional precautions are needed. For a **total of 10 days (or 20 days for immunocompromised individuals)** after symptom onset or your positive test result:
 - Continue to wear a well-fitted mask and physical distance in all public settings
 - Reasonable exceptions would include temporarily removing a mask for essential activities like eating (e.g. eating lunch in a shared area at school, while maintaining distance from others)
 - Avoid activities where mask removal would be necessary (e.g. dining out, contact sports)
 - Do not visit anyone who is immunocompromised or at higher risk of illness (e.g. seniors)
 - Do not visit or attend work in any highest-risk settings
- Contact Telehealth (1-866-797-0000) or your health care provider if you have questions about your symptoms.
- If you are having difficulty breathing or require medical attention, call 911 and notify them of your COVID-19 status.
- If you are a caregiver to someone with COVID-19, please see [this handout](#) for tips to keep yourself safe.
- You are encouraged to report your COVID-19 symptoms or diagnosis (PCR or RAT confirmed) to your employer or health and safety department, as they may work with you to notify close contacts and form a plan for return to work.
- If you tested positive and have the [Covid Alert app](#), you can also notify other app users you have been near, by going to the [Test Results Website](#) and following the instructions.

Step 2: Notify All Household Members

- Household members should generally **self-isolate** for the same amount of time as the positive/symptomatic person, **with the following exceptions**:



- Household members who are aged **18+ and have already received their [booster dose](#)** are not required to isolate.
 - Household members who are **under 18 years of age and are considered [fully vaccinated](#)** are not required to isolate.
 - Household members who have previously **tested positive for COVID-19 in the last 90 days** (based on a positive PCR/ID Now/RAT result) are not required to isolate **and** can attend high-risk settings, as long as they are asymptomatic.
- Whether household members are required to self-isolate or not, **for a total of 10 days after their last exposure** to the COVID-19 positive or symptomatic person, they must:
 - Self-monitor for [symptoms](#) and [self-isolate](#) if any symptoms of COVID-19 develop;
 - Continue to wear a well-fitted mask and physical distance in all public settings;
 - Avoid activities where mask removal would be necessary (i.e. dining out, contact sports);
 - Not visit anyone who is immunocompromised or at higher risk of illness (i.e. seniors);
 - Not visit or attend work in a highest-risk setting (unless they have previously tested positive for COVID-19 in the last 90 days).
 - If [COVID-19 symptoms](#) develop, or they test positive on a Rapid Antigen Test, they must immediately self-isolate and follow the instructions above. They should not visit an assessment center for PCR testing, unless part of an [eligible group](#).
 - **For self-isolating household members** that have not developed symptoms, if any other household members develop COVID-19 symptoms, they should **extend their self-isolation** until the last symptomatic (or COVID-19 positive) person has finished their self-isolation. The initial COVID-19 positive/symptomatic person **does not have to extend** their isolation period based on other household members becoming ill.

Further information for household close contacts can be found in the [Letter for Close Contacts](#).

Step 3: Notify Your Non-Household Close Contacts

- A close contact is anyone you were less than 2 meters away from for at least 15 minutes, or multiple shorter lengths of time, without the appropriate measures of masking, distancing, and/or use of personal protective equipment, in the 48 hours before your symptoms began or your positive test result, whichever came first, and until you started self-isolating.
- A close contact can be someone you shook hands with, hugged, or kissed, or someone you were sitting near, as COVID-19 can spread by someone coughing, sneezing, or talking.
- It is important that you **notify all your close contacts** that they may have been exposed to COVID-19, and the actions they can take to protect themselves and their loved ones. **Provide all close contacts with the [Letter for Close Contacts](#).**

Note: *If you attended a group setting (i.e., school, work), generally, contacts in those settings would **not** be considered close contacts due to safety measures in place. However, you may notify specific individuals that you may have had prolonged, unprotected contact with within or outside of the setting.*

Failure to follow the guidance within this letter may result in enforcement under the [Health Protection and Promotion Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. H.7](#).

Other COVID-19 Measures and Precautions

After your self-isolation, you are encouraged to continue following public health measures when outside your home and take precautions to protect yourself and your loved ones. This includes getting vaccinated against COVID-19, practicing proper hand hygiene, practicing proper respiratory etiquette, and staying home if sick.

More Information

For more information, visit the [Algoma COVID-19: Case and Contact Guide](#) or call the COVID-19 Support Line at 705-942-4646 ext. 5404. The phone line is open weekdays (Monday to Friday) from 9:00am – 4:00pm.

The information in this letter is intended for the direct recipients. Please do not disseminate or distribute further.