

MY CHILD HAS BEEN IDENTIFIED AS A CLOSE CONTACT OF SOMEONE CONFIRMED TO HAVE COVID-19

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When a person is confirmed to have COVID-19, the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit does an investigation to gather more information. We ask questions of the person who has COVID-19 (or their parents/guardians) and may also contact the school/child care to gather information to understand who may be at risk of exposure.

WHY IS MY CHILD A CLOSE CONTACT?

After investigating the situation, we have concluded that your child may have been exposed to COVID-19 by being close to a person who is confirmed to have COVID-19 in any of the following situations:

- being in the same classroom, cohort or bus,
- being closer than 2 metres (6 feet), for 15 minutes in total (e.g., at one time, or through smaller interactions adding up to 15 minutes), when either your child or the other person was not wearing a mask.

IF MY CHILD IS A CLOSE CONTACT, DO THEY NEED TO ISOLATE?

If your child is identified as a close contact and they are **not fully vaccinated they must:**

- Stay home (self-isolate) from school and cannot go to recreational activities or interact in person with others outside of your home.
- Be tested at a local assessment centre (do not use an “at home” testing kit/rapid antigen test kit).
- Not leave your property unless it is to go for testing or to seek medical attention.

If your child is identified as a close contact and they are **fully vaccinated** they are not required to isolate and can return to school as long as they do not have any symptoms of COVID-19 and they pass the daily COVID-19 screening. It is still recommended that they **get tested at a local assessment centre**. They must also wear a mask and maintain physical distancing when outside of the home to reduce the risk of transmission to others if they become case.

SHOULD I TAKE MY CHILD FOR TESTING?

Regardless of your child’s vaccination status, it is important to get your child tested at an assessment centre because they have been in close contact with another person that has tested positive. It is possible to get a positive test result and to be infectious to others without having any symptoms. **(Please do not use an at home testing kit/rapid antigen test kit).**

DOES MY CHILD NEED TO ISOLATE IF THEIR COVID-19 TEST IS NEGATIVE?

Your child must isolate for the full time period indicated by the health unit, even if they don’t have symptoms and even with a negative test result. This is because the COVID-19 incubation period (the period between exposure to the virus and the start of the first symptoms) can be up to 10 days from the time they were exposed to the virus.

Note: Students who are not fully vaccinated and in close contact (in a cohort, class, bus, etc.) with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19, and children (18 years or under) who live in the same house as someone identified as a close contact, should generally expect to be excluded from school. Those who are fully vaccinated should generally expect to be able to continue to attend school.

WHAT HAPPENS IF MY CHILD DEVELOPS SYMPTOMS?

Anyone, regardless of their vaccination status must self-isolate and get tested if they develop symptoms. If anyone in the household develops symptoms, then anyone else (children or adults) who are **not fully vaccinated** must stay home and isolate while awaiting test results. It is important that you contact the health unit because this is new information that could help with the investigation. Follow the guidance from your public health contact about getting tested.

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WHAT HAPPENS IF MY CHILD'S TEST RESULT IS POSITIVE?

Most children with COVID-19 will have mild symptoms and are able to recover at home with a caregiver without needing hospitalization. If your child receives a positive COVID-19 test result, you will be contacted by public health and provided with further direction.

HOW DO I SUPPORT MY CHILD TO ISOLATE AT HOME?

- Your child must stay in their own home unless they leave to be tested or for other medical reasons.
- An adult who already lives with the child should care for them. For children who are part of shared custody agreement, where possible, parenting exchanges should not take place when a child is isolating and should only resume once the isolation period is over.
- For young children, one healthy person should provide care and wear a mask when in close contact (within 2 metres). Gloves and eye protection can also be worn if available. For older children we recommend they keep as much distance as possible from the people they live with and wear a mask or face covering that covers their nose and mouth if they need to be within 2 metres of household members.
- If there are vulnerable people who live in the home, they should not provide care for your child unless necessary.
- Do not have any visitors to your home while your child is isolating.
- Do not share items with your child (like a drinking glass, utensils etc.) unless washed thoroughly between uses.
- If possible, have your child use a separate bathroom and bedroom. If this is not possible, clean commonly touched surfaces (like doorknobs, light switches, counters, etc.) more often.
- Encourage your child to wash their hands often with soap and water. Give them a paper towel or a cloth towel that is just for them to use.
- Your child is not allowed to attend any activities, sports, clubs, events, play dates etc. during their isolation.
- Caregivers and other members of the household should monitor themselves for symptoms of COVID-19.

DO HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS HAVE TO STAY HOME FROM SCHOOL/CHILD CARE OR WORK?

When a person is identified as a close contact and is not fully vaccinated*:

- **Any other children (18 years and younger)** who live in the same house and are not fully vaccinated **must follow** the same isolation recommendations, and not leave their property unless it is to go for testing or to seek necessary medical attention. This includes not going to school, child care, and other activities outside of the home.
- **Adults (19 years or older)** who live in the same house and who are not fully vaccinated should stay home except for essential reasons, if they themselves are not close contacts and there are no COVID-19 cases in the household. Essential reasons for leaving home include going to the grocery store or pharmacy; accessing health care services; attending school and for essential in-person work.

This does not apply for those who are fully vaccinated* OR who have tested positive for COVID-19 in the last 90 days.**

*Fully Vaccinated means that you have received:

- A full series of a COVID-19 vaccine authorized by Health Canada, or any combination of such vaccines
- One or two doses of a COVID-19 vaccine not authorized by Health Canada, followed by one dose of a COVID-19 mRNA vaccine authorized by Health Canada, or
- Three doses of a COVID-19 vaccine not authorized by Health Canada, and
- Your final dose of the COVID-19 vaccine was at least 14 days ago or prior to the exposure date.

**Some household members of close contacts may be able to return to school if they have tested positive for COVID-19 in the last 90 days and have been cleared by public health.

WHY DOESN'T THE HEALTH UNIT SHARE WHO THE PERSON IS THAT TESTED POSITIVE?

Due to privacy laws, the health unit will not release personal or identifying information about any staff or student who is ill unless deemed necessary. All efforts will be made to protect the privacy of individuals who have been diagnosed.

For more information about COVID-19 please contact Health Connection at 1-877-721-7520.

Public health professionals are available Monday to Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.