

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

Last revised: December 1, 2020

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.

The health unit decides who is a close contact by looking at what personal protective equipment (PPE) was worn by the person who has COVID-19, who they were close to, as well as what type of interaction they had. For this reason, the definition of close contact may not be the same in every situation.

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,
- being closer than 2 metres (6 feet) away, for 15 minutes or more (more than just in passing),
- being in the same room or area for 15 minutes or more.

HOW DO I ISOLATE MY CHILD?

- Your child has to 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 door knobs, 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.

SHOULD FAMILY MEMBERS STAY HOME FROM SCHOOL/CHILD CARE OR WORK?

No, family members can go to work, school or child care but need to monitor for symptoms and complete the daily self-screening if applicable. If your child tests positive for COVID-19, or if your household members develop any symptoms, then your household members must start isolating.

WHY SHOULD I TAKE MY CHILD FOR TESTING, THEY DON'T HAVE ANY SYMPTOMS?

It is important to get your child tested 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.

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WHY 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 14 days from the time they were exposed to the virus.

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.

WHAT HAPPENS IF MY CHILD DEVELOPS SYMPTOMS?

They need to stay in isolation at home, and it is important that you contact the health unit because this is new information that could help with the investigation.

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.

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 6:00 p.m. and Saturdays from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.