

COVID-19 (formerly known as 2019 nCoV): Update #5 Specimen Collection Information and Updated Guidance Documents

Attention: Physicians, Emergency Departments, Infection Control Practitioners, Occupational Health Practitioners, Walk-In Clinics/Urgent Care Clinics, Nurse Practitioners, EMS, Designated Officers, Midwives, Family Health Teams, Pharmacies, Central LHIN, NSM LHIN

Date: February 18, 2020

As outlined by the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection.html>, there have been eight confirmed cases of COVID-19 (three in Ontario and five in British Columbia) to date. There have been no presumptive or confirmed cases in the Simcoe Muskoka area. To date, the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit (SMDHU) has had a total of 12 persons under investigation, all of which tested negative for COVID-19. From what we know so far, the virus can cause mild, flu-like symptoms as well as severe disease. Current information indicates that the incubation period is 2 to 14 days after exposure to the virus. The duration of infectivity for COVID-19 infection is currently unknown and this continues to be an emerging and evolving situation. SMDHU will provide updated information as it becomes available.

1. Person Under Investigation (PUI) Case Definition as of February 7, 2019:

A person with fever and/or cough or difficulty breathing **AND** any of the following:

- Travel to **mainland China (excluding Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan)** in the 14 days before onset of illness
OR
- Close contact with a confirmed or probable case of 2019-nCoV
OR
- Close contact with a person with acute respiratory illness who has been to **mainland China** within 14 days prior to their illness onset

If you have a patient who meets the PUI definition, please contact the Infectious Diseases Team at 705-721-7520 ext. 8809 during regular business hours (Monday to Friday 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.) or after hours at 1-888-225-7851.

Testing Outside the Case Definition:

The Public Health Ontario Laboratory is no longer requiring clinicians to call ahead to test for COVID-19 if a patient is symptomatic. It is not recommended at this time to test asymptomatic patients. If a clinician wants to test an asymptomatic patient, they should contact the Public Health Ontario Laboratory directly to discuss this further at 416-235-6556 / 1-877-604-4567 or the After Hours Emergency Duty Officer at 416-605-3113.



If testing occurs, regardless if it is within the PUI case definition or not, the client will be considered a PUI and thus must be reported to SMDHU by contacting the Infectious Diseases Team at 705-721-7520 ext. 8809 during regular business hours (Monday to Friday 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.) or after hours at 1-888-225-7851.

2. Specimen Collection

Public Health Ontario (PHO) has released a [COVID-19 Test Requisition Form](#). As outlined by PHO, please include the mandatory elements below on the requisition:

- Whether the individual meets criteria for a person under investigation (yes/no)
- Travel history (country and dates)
- Contact of case or probable case (yes/no); if no, other sick contacts (yes/no; if yes, describe)
- Symptom onset date
- Patient symptoms (fever, cough, runny nose, pneumonia)
- Patient setting (ICU, hospitalized, ER or outpatient)

It is recommended that both a **nasopharyngeal swab (NPS) AND a viral throat swab be collected. Instructions on which swab kit and how to swab is outlined [here](#).** If the patient has a productive cough, it is further recommended to collect a sputum sample. Note that an N95 mask, and droplet and contact precautions are recommended for the clinician, but a negative-pressure room is not necessary if one is not available. COVID-19 at this time is not thought to be airborne, and therefore the room can be cleaned and used immediately after without the two hour waiting period that is recommended for airborne diseases such as measles.

For more information on the requirements, please visit PHO's Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Testing webpage at: <https://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/laboratory-services/test-information-index/wuhan-novel-coronavirus>.

3. Resources and Documents

There are a number of resources and documents available through our Health Professional Portal at www.smdhu.org/hpportal.

Here is a list of new resources added or updated since the last health fax:

- [Guidance for Primary Care Providers in a Community Setting](#) (Update)
- [Guidance for Acute Care](#) (Update)
- [Guidance for Home and Community Care Providers](#) (Update)
- [Guidance for Long-Term Care](#) (Update)
- [Guidance for Paramedic Services](#) (Update)
- [Guidance for Independent Health Facilities](#) (NEW)
- [Guidance for Laboratories](#) (NEW)
- [Guidance for Pharmacies](#) (NEW)

Asymptomatic traveler recommendations remain the same as previous health fax where travelers from Hubei province in China should self-isolate for 14 days from the day they left the Hubei province to come to Canada and contact the Infectious Diseases Team at 705-721-7520 ext. 8809 during regular business hours (Monday to Friday 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.) or after hours at 1-888-225-7851. Travelers from the rest of mainland China (excluding Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan) should self-monitor for signs and symptoms for 14 days after leaving mainland China and contact the Infectious Disease Team at the number listed above if symptoms develop.

The Government of Ontario has a dedicated website for Coronavirus which has general information as well as provincial PUI statistics which are updated daily. This can be found at the following website address: <https://www.ontario.ca/page/2019-novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov>. Additionally, the Ministry of Health has a dedicated website for Coronavirus with all relevant guidance and information. This can be found at the following website address: <http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/publichealth/coronavirus>.

If you have any questions or to report persons under investigation for 2019-nCoV, please contact the Infectious Diseases Team at 705-721-7520 ext. 8809 during regular business hours (Monday to Friday 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.) or after hours at 1-888-225-7851.