

## **COVID-19: Update #19**

### **SMDHU COVID-19 Epidemiological Update**

#### **Updated: Quick Reference Public Health Guidance on Testing and Clearance**

**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, Beausoleil First Nation, Moose Deer Point First Nation, Rama First Nation, Wahta First Nation, Long-term Care Homes, Retirement Homes, Hospices

**Date:** July 15, 2020

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The Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit (SMDHU) has seen a decrease in case counts for the four last consecutive weeks with 4,700 COVID swab tests completed. The percent positivity rate of COVID tests is currently at 0.2% vs 0.6% provincially. Additionally, there are no confirmed outbreaks in workplaces nor in institutional settings at this time. Although we are seeing a decrease in cases in our community, it is important we continue to stay the course with our measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19 as we approach stage 3 reopening later this week. If you have any patients who display signs and symptoms consistent with COVID-19, please direct them to get tested as soon as possible and to self-isolate at home, as it will help in decreasing the risk of large outbreaks.

As of Monday July 13, 2020, the public is required to wear a face covering (i.e. non-medical mask) when entering the indoor premises of businesses (including health care settings such as outpatient clinics and primary care settings), organizations and on public transit systems in Simcoe Muskoka. These [instructions](#) have been issued [under the authority](#)<sup>i</sup> of the provincial [Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act](#)<sup>ii</sup> (EMCPA) in an effort to prevent the possible spread of COVID-19. We are taking an educational approach to encourage the public on this, and are not requiring medical exemption notes for those who are unable to tolerate/wear a face covering.

The following individuals do not have to wear a face covering in indoor public spaces:

- Children under two years of age, or children under the age of five years either chronologically or developmentally who refuse to wear a mask and cannot be persuaded to do so by their caregiver.
- Individuals with medical conditions rendering them unable to safely wear a mask, including those with breathing difficulties or cognitive difficulties or difficulties in hearing or processing information.
- Anyone who is unable to remove the mask without help
- Anyone wearing a face covering that would inhibit the ability to breathe in any way such as, but not limited to, during moderate to intense physical activity (such as running) or activity that would preclude its use (such as swimming).
- Individuals who cannot wear face coverings for any religious reasons.

For clinical encounters with patients with no COVID symptoms or acquisition risk factors, in order to prevent asymptomatic transmission, please universally wear a surgical/procedural mask and eye protection. Universal masking for staff working in clinical areas where patients have access to is also recommended.

The most current case counts for laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 cases in the Simcoe Muskoka District Health (SMDHU) region are available at [Simcoe Muskoka Health Stats](#)<sup>iii</sup>.



Updated: [Quick Reference Public Health Guidance on Testing and Clearance](#)<sup>iv</sup> (June 25, 2020)

- Revisions to asymptomatic testing (and retesting criteria)
- Addition of management of individuals who are asymptomatic with an exposure risk who refuse testing
- Revisions of recommendations for Health Care Workers Return to Work
- Addition of Work-Self Isolation in Non-Health Care Settings

There are a number of other resources and documents available through our Health Professional Portal at [www.smdhu.org/hpportal](http://www.smdhu.org/hpportal) as well as through [Public Health Ontario](#)<sup>v</sup> and the [Government of Ontario](#)<sup>vi</sup>

For further healthcare worker information regarding COVID-19 or to report a suspect or confirmed case of COVID-19, please contact the Infectious Diseases Team at (705) 721-7520 extension 8809 during business hours (Monday to Friday 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.) or after hours at 1-888-225-7851.

<sup>i</sup> <https://www.ontario.ca/laws/regulation/r20263>

<sup>ii</sup> <https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/90e09>

<sup>iii</sup> <http://www.simcoemuskokahealthstats.org/topics/infectious-diseases/a-h/covid-19>

<sup>iv</sup> [http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/publichealth/coronavirus/docs/2019\\_testing\\_clearing\\_cases\\_guidance.pdf](http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/publichealth/coronavirus/docs/2019_testing_clearing_cases_guidance.pdf)

<sup>v</sup> <https://www.publichealthontario.ca/>

<sup>vi</sup> [http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/publichealth/coronavirus/2019\\_guidance.aspx](http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/publichealth/coronavirus/2019_guidance.aspx)