

MEMORANDUM

TO: Niagara Region Schools and Childcare Settings

FROM: Niagara Region Public Health

SUBJECT: Update on Niagara Specific Guidance for COVID-19 in the School and Childcare Settings

THIS MEMO REPLACES THE FEBRUARY 5TH MEMORANDUM

DATE: February 22, 2021

Good afternoon,

Please see an updated communication below from Niagara Region Public Health related to COVID-19 for children in school and child care.

ACTIVE SCREENING, ESPECIALLY FOR ADULTS (E.G., STAFF, ESSENTIAL VISITORS), IS THE BEST LINE OF DEFENSE FOR PREVENTING COVID-19 IN THE SCHOOL OR CHILD CARE SETTING.

NEW SCREENING CRITERIA

If a child has **one or more** of the following **new or worsening** symptoms:

- Fever
- Cough
- Runny nose or stuffy/congestion
- Decrease or loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Headache
- Nausea, vomiting or diarrhea
- Fatigue, extreme tiredness or muscle aches

They must **self-isolate at home** immediately and either:

- Contact their health care provider for a medical assessment
- OR**
- Contact the Niagara Health COVID-19 Assessment Centre to book an appointment for testing, this can be done [on-line](#) or by calling Niagara Health at 905-378-4647 ext. 42819

TESTING AND RETURN TO SCHOOL

Children who need an assessment for testing based on their symptom(s) are not allowed to return to school/child care, or go to any public setting until one of the following has happened:

- A health care provider has told you that a test for COVID-19 is not needed.
OR
- The child had a test that was negative for COVID-19. They may go back to school/child care 24 hours after fever, shortness of breath, sore throat, and headache have all gone away without use of fever reducing medications **AND** any other symptoms are improving.
OR
- If your child is not assessed by a health care provider, and testing for COVID-19 was declined for any reason, we must assume the child has COVID-19 and the child is to self-isolate for 10 days (away from household members) **AND** all household contacts are to stay home and self-isolate for 14 days.
Note: Ten days after symptoms start, children can return to school/child care as long as they don't have a fever (without use of fever reducing medication) and they are feeling better.
OR
- A health care provider has told you that the symptom(s) are related to a chronic or pre-existing condition (e.g., allergies, post-nasal drip, migraines, asthma). In this case, your child can return to school/child care once they feel well enough, without waiting for symptoms to go away.

RE-TESTING

Individuals who previously tested positive for COVID-19 generally can discontinue isolation after 10 days from symptom onset (or 10 days from positive test collection date if patient never had symptoms), provided that the individual has no fever (without the use of fever-reducing medications) and symptoms are improving for at least 24 hours. As individuals can test positive for weeks after infection, re-testing of prior cases is not recommended for return to school/childcare unless requested by Public Health.

SIBLINGS AND OTHER HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS LIVING WITH A SYMPTOMATIC CHILD

- If a test is recommended by a health care provider for the symptomatic child, or a decision is made to get testing at an assessment centre, all household members are to self-isolate, until the test results are back. If the test is negative, household members can leave self-isolation.
- If testing for COVID-19 is declined for any reason, your child and your entire household must stay home and self-isolate. The child is to self-isolate for 10 days (away from household members, when possible) and all household contacts are to stay home and self-isolate for 14 days.
NOTE: If self-isolation away from household members is not possible, household members are to remain in self-isolation for 14 days from last exposure to the symptomatic child. If household members become symptomatic, they should consult their health care provider and/or go for testing.
- If the test is positive, household members must stay in self-isolation and will receive further direction from Public Health.
- If a health care provider advises that a test for COVID-19 is not needed, household members can leave self-isolation.

SIBLINGS OF AN ISOLATING COHORT

- Siblings who are not contacts, but are household members of an isolating cohort, may continue to attend school as long as they, and all household members, remain symptom free.

If a staff member or other adult develops symptoms, including **any single new or worsening symptom**, they must always remain home and follow ONE of the following options:

- Contact their health care provider, walk-in clinic, or online virtual clinic for guidance (which can be provided over the phone).
- OR**
- Contact a Niagara Health COVID-19 Assessment Centre to book an appointment for testing. This can be done [on-line](#) or by calling Niagara Health at 905-378-4647 ext. 42819.

All household members are to self isolate until the test results are returned.

For more COVID-19 information go to www.niagararegion.ca or you may contact the Public Health COVID-19 Info-Line at 905-688-8248, press 7.