

Ministry of Health | Office of Chief Medical Officer of Health, Public Health

COVID-19 Guidance Updates and 5-11 Boosters

Context and Chief Medical Officer of Health Plans for Case and Contact Management Guidance

- As part of Fall 2022 preparedness planning, there will be a **continued need to respond to COVID-19**, and it is expected that the **upcoming fall/winter respiratory season will present challenges**.
- As such, there is need to **protect health sector capacity and health human resources**.
- There are also opportunities to **align case and contact management guidance with current public health evidence** on COVID-19 and respiratory virus transmission, **and other Canadian jurisdictions**.
- **Clear and simple public messaging** will also be critical for Ontarians to understand what personal actions they can take in the fight against COVID-19.

The Chief Medical Officer of Health is updating its current case and contact management guidance to:

- Change the five-day isolation recommendation to be “stay home if sick;”
- Remove isolation recommendation for asymptomatic cases;
- Remove quarantine recommendation for unvaccinated close contacts;
- Remove quarantine recommendation for close contacts who work in highest-risk settings; and
- Update isolation and case and contact management guidance for higher risk sectors such as long-term care homes, retirement homes, other congregate care living settings, international agricultural workers, etc. *(*not part of August 31st announcement)*

Supporting Ontario's *Plan to Stay Open 2.0*

- These guidance changes support the government's recent announcement of the *Plan to Stay Open*.
- The end of isolation requirements for close contacts related to highest-risk settings will help to manage staff absences this fall, while still protecting the most vulnerable.
- Workplaces and schools will be protected from both COVID and other respiratory illnesses as people are asked to stay home with symptoms regardless if they test negative for COVID, and are asked to mask and avoid highest risk settings for 10 days to prevent illness spread.
- The changes balance the need to keep our most vulnerable safe while ensuring isolation and other public health guidance are suitable for this point in the pandemic, where there is a high degree of community immunity, availability of vaccine boosters and a virus that is not severe for those who are younger and not immunocompromised.

Public Guidance for Managing COVID-19 Symptoms

General guidance for the public

“Stay home if you are sick”

This means:

- **Staying home** until you have no fever and your symptoms are improving for at least 24 hours (or 48 hours if you have gastro-intestinal symptoms).
- After isolating, **wear a mask** when out in public for 10 days from when your symptoms started.
- **Avoid non-essential visits** to vulnerable individuals at risk of severe infection and highest risk settings (e.g., hospitals, long-term care) for 10 days from when your symptoms started.
- Follow this advice whether you have tested for COVID or not.
- Make sure you know if you are **eligible for COVID treatments and how to get tested** and access treatment if you are eligible.

Summary of Changes to Case and Contact Management Guidance: Public Messaging

Population	Original Guidance	Guidance Change
<p>Individuals with COVID-19 symptoms</p> <p>(Note: no changes to PCR testing eligibility)</p>	<p>Minimum 5 days of isolation.</p>	<p>Stay home while sick – i.e., until afebrile and symptoms improving for 24 hours (48 hours for gastro-intestinal symptoms), regardless of testing results or no testing.</p> <p>Continue to wear a mask for 10 days from symptom onset after isolating, and avoid non-essential visits to vulnerable individuals and highest risk settings for 10 days.</p> <p>Recommendations for those eligible for PCR testing and treatment to get tested.</p> <p>Isolation for 10 days for hospitalized, immunocompromised and those in highest risk settings remains.</p>
<p>Individuals who test positive but are asymptomatic</p>	<p>Minimum 5 days of isolation.</p>	<p>No longer require isolation if remain asymptomatic. Same recommendation to mask and avoid vulnerable individuals and settings for 10 days. Recommendation to isolate if symptoms develop.</p>
<p>Individuals who are close contacts</p>	<p>10 days of quarantine for household contacts not fully vaccinated/boosted.</p>	<p>No longer require quarantine regardless of vaccination status.</p> <p>Advise to wear a mask for 10 days from last exposure and avoid non-essential visits to vulnerable individuals and settings. Advise to isolate immediately if symptoms develop.</p>

Summary of Changes to Case and Contact Management Guidance: Supporting Health Human Resources

Population	Original Guidance	Guidance Change
<p>Individuals who work in highest risk settings</p> <p>(Note: no changes to availability of PCR or RATs to support)</p>	<p>10 days of quarantine and test to work options (where testing was required).</p>	<p>No longer require quarantine for close contacts. Return to work immediately with testing recommendations and measures to reduce risk of transmission in the workplace. Isolate and test immediately if symptomatic.</p> <p>NO change for isolation requirements for those with symptoms and/or test positive for COVID-19, including current early return to work strategies for staffing shortage, and ability to work with non-COVID-19 patients.</p>

Boosters 5-11 yrs



5-11 – First Boosters

- **Primary Series for 5-11 years was allowed starting November 23, 2021.** As such, it has been approximately 6-8 months since their complete primary series
- **Health Canada and NACI approvals** (August 19, 2022)
 - Strong NACI Recommendation: For children 5 to 11 years of age with **an underlying medical condition that places them at high risk** of severe illness due to COVID-19
 - Discretionary NACI Recommendation: For **all other children** 5 to 11 years of age
- **Implementation Components**
 - Anticipated demand: Approx. 100K doses (low 1st and 2nd dose uptake)
 - Supply: Pfizer pediatric vaccine currently available
 - All product expires Sept 30
 - Initial push to each PHU to reach 10% of 5-11 population
 - Provincial Booking System: Readiness confirmed
- **Implementation Date for Ontario:** September 1, 2022