



## FAQ: MANAGING SYMPTOMS AND SCENARIOS OF COVID-19

### Q. If my child wakes up and is not feeling well, what are the next steps I should take?

- A. If your child has any new or worsening **symptoms of COVID-19**, even only one symptom, he/she must stay home and self-isolate. Your next steps are:
- **Book** an appointment to have him/her tested for COVID-19; or
  - Contact your healthcare provider for assessment and alternate diagnosis.
  - If your child is not tested or provided with an alternate diagnosis, he/she must stay home for at least 10 days from the onset of symptoms.
  - Contact HSC **Health Services** and the school's administrative assistant to inform them of the absence. He/she may participate in HSC@Home if feeling well enough to do so.

### Q. If one of my children must stay home because of a new or worsening symptom of COVID-19, can my other children attend school if they have no symptoms?

- A. No. If one of your children must stay home because of symptoms, the other children must also stay home until COVID-19 has been ruled out for the child with symptoms.

### Q. If someone in my household has symptoms compatible with COVID-19 but my child(ren) is feeling well, can he/she attend school?

- A. No. If someone in your household has symptoms of COVID-19, your child(ren) must stay home until COVID-19 has been ruled out for the household member with symptoms.

### Q. If I get a call from the school that my child is unwell, what is my responsibility as a parent?

- A. If your child becomes ill at school, Health Services will contact you and request that you pick up your child as soon as possible. If you are unable to pick up your child right away, please arrange for the emergency contact to pick up your child. A member of the Health Services team will remain with your child in the isolation room until you arrive. If you have other children attending school, they will also be dismissed home at the same time.

### Q. The list of COVID-19 related symptoms is quite broad. How do I know whether my child is experiencing another viral illness and not COVID-19?

- A. While there are other viral illnesses with symptoms similar to COVID-19, the only way to rule out COVID-19 is through laboratory testing. If your child is experiencing any of the symptoms compatible with COVID19, testing is recommended to conclusively rule it out. If you think your child has a cold or the flu, you should still have him/her tested as symptoms are similar to COVID-19.

## Q. When can my child return to school after experiencing symptoms of COVID-19?

- A. Your child can return to school once the following conditions are met:
- He/she has been tested for COVID-19 and the result is NEGATIVE; or
  - He/she has been assessed by a healthcare provider and has been provided with an alternate diagnosis; or
  - He/she has been home for a minimum of 10 days since the onset of symptoms;
- AND**
- He/she has been fever-free for a period of at least 24 hours without the aid of fever reducing medications (Tylenol, Advil);
  - Symptoms have significantly improved or resolved.

You must contact **Health Services** prior to your child's return to school. Please note that Health Services will request a copy of his/her COVID-19 test results or a doctor's note with an alternate diagnosis prior to your child(ren) returning to school. A diagnosis of "common cold, influenza or respiratory infection" is not acceptable without a negative COVID-19 test.

## Q. If my child tests POSITIVE for COVID-19, when can he/she return to school?

- A. If your child tests POSITIVE for COVID-19, he/she must self-isolate for a minimum of 10 days from the date of testing and can only return to school when cleared by Hamilton Public Health.

## Q. If my child is confirmed to be positive for COVID-19, do I need to inform the school?

- A. If your child is confirmed to be positive for COVID-19, please contact Cindy Lima Rivera, RN, Manager of Health Services as soon as possible. You can reach her at ext. 197 during business hours or via email at [cindy.limarivera@hsc.on.ca](mailto:cindy.limarivera@hsc.on.ca). Informing the school as soon as possible ensures that Health Services can start the contact tracing process with Public Health and therefore ensure the safety of our community, identification of close contacts and timely communication to families that will need to self-isolate. The privacy and confidentiality of your child will be protected and will not be disclosed without your explicit consent and only for the purpose of contact tracing.

## Q. If my child is confirmed to be positive for COVID-19, will I need to have him/her re-tested before coming back to school?

- A. Hamilton Public Health and the Province of Ontario do not recommend using a negative test to show recovery from COVID-19. Research on COVID-19 has found that many individuals who have had COVID-19 continue to shed dead non-infectious virus or virus pieces for weeks to months following infection. This viral shedding can result in a positive test. Hamilton Public Health will advise you of when your child can return to school provided he/she has completed a 10-day self-isolation period, has been fever-free for at least 24 hours without the aid of medications and symptoms have improved or resolved. Please follow the recommendations of Hamilton Public Health with regards to when your child can return to school.

**Q. If there is a confirmed case of COVID-19 at HSC, how will I know if my family needs to self-isolate?**

**A.** If your child(ren) has been a close contact of a confirmed positive case of COVID-19, you will be contacted directly by Hamilton Public Health. Health Services will work with public health to determine who the close contacts are and Public Health will be responsible for contact tracing and follow up. At their discretion, Public Health may direct Health Services or the school principal to contact you and inform you that your child has been exposed to a positive case of COVID-19.

**Q. If someone in my household has travelled internationally or we have an overseas visitor staying in our home, can my child(ren) attend school?**

**A.** No. If someone in your household is completing the mandated 14-day quarantine after travelling internationally, your child(ren) must stay home for the duration of the quarantine period. If the individual that travelled is **exempt from quarantine** because they are deemed essential, your child(ren) can attend school.

**Q. If someone in my household has been advised to self-isolate because of close contact with a positive COVID-19 case, can my child(ren) still attend school?**

**A.** No. If someone in your household has been directed to self-isolate because of close contact, your child(ren) must stay home for 14 days. It is recommended that the close contact gets tested as soon as notified, if they develop symptoms or on day 10 of their isolation period (if asymptomatic). A negative COVID-19 test for the individual deemed a close contact does not reduce the period of self-isolation for the entire household.

**Q. If my child or someone in my household receives an exposure notification from the COVID Alert App, what do we have to do?**

**A.** Get tested for COVID-19 as soon as possible and contact your local public health unit for further instructions.

**Q. If my child or my family travels within Canada, do we need to isolate upon returning home to Ontario?**

**A.** The recommendation for traveling outside of Ontario under the **COVID-19 response framework: keeping Ontario safe and open**, is to “self-quarantine, or drastically reduce close contact with others 10 to 14 days before travelling and after returning home, to help lower the risk of exposure to COVID-19”. To mitigate as much risk as possible to our greater community, your children will need to stay home for 10 - 14 days after interprovincial travel.