



COMMUNITY NOTICE

For Immediate Release:

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EOHU ANNOUNCES NEW CHANGES TO COVID-19 TESTING AND ISOLATION REQUIREMENTS

The Eastern Ontario Health Unit (EOHU) has announced changes Public Health Measures, effective on December 31, 2021. Mohawk Council of Akwesasne's (MCA) Community Health Program will be adopting the changes effective as of January 1, 2022. Public Health Measures that will see a change are: testing guidelines, isolation periods, fourth doses for long-term care residents, and capacity limits to large in-door settings.

Changes to Testing Guidelines

Ontario will be shifting its strategy and making publicly funded PCR testing available to only high-risk individuals who are symptomatic and/or at risk of severe illness from COVID-19. Workers and residents in the highest risk settings and other vulnerable populations will continue to have access to PCR testing.

Community members with mild symptoms are not a part of a high-risk population and are asked to not seek testing. Individuals with positive rapid antigen tests will no longer have to receive a PCR test to confirm their COVID status. A positive rapid antigen test will be considered a positive COVID-19 case.

Health units will no longer perform contact tracing and case management for a positive case in low-risk settings.

Changes to Isolation Period

Ontario is also changing the isolation period for people who contract COVID-19. Research has demonstrated that healthy individuals who contract the virus are most infectious in the two (2) days before they start having symptoms and the three (3) days after symptoms began.

Individuals who have tested positive on a COVID-19 test (PCR, rapid molecular or rapid antigen) should self-isolate immediately.

If the individual is 12 years of age or older, and is either partially vaccinated (received one dose) or unvaccinated, they must self-isolate for 10 days from the onset of symptoms, or from the date of their test.



If the individual is immunocompromised (regardless of age or vaccine status), they must self-isolate for 10 days from the onset of symptoms, or the date of their test.

If the individual is 12 years of age or older, and is fully vaccinated, they must self-isolate for five (5) days from the onset of symptoms and until their symptoms have been improving for 24 hours (or 48 hours if gastrointestinal symptoms were part of their symptoms), whichever is longer in duration. Any members of a symptomatic person's household must also isolate for five days, regardless of vaccination status.

If the individual is under 12 years of age (regardless of vaccination status), they must self-isolate for five (5) days from the onset of symptoms and until their symptoms have been improving for 24 hours (or 48 hours if gastrointestinal symptoms were part of their symptoms), whichever is longer in duration.

Fourth Doses for Long-term Care Residents

Ontario will make fourth doses of mRNA vaccines available to all residents of long-term care (LTC) homes, retirement homes, Elder Care Lodges and other congregate care settings. To be eligible, a minimum of three (3) months, or 84 days, must have passed since their third dose.

Third doses of the COVID-19 vaccine will also be mandated for all staff, students, volunteers, caregivers, and support workers in congregate care settings. Those eligible must receive their booster by January 28, 2022.

When general visitors will be allowed in LTC settings again, they will also have to provide proof of a booster dose.

Limiting the Spread of COVID-19 in Large Indoor Settings

Ontario is limiting the capacity in large indoor settings to 50 percent, or 1,000, whichever is less. This new limit will be applied to spectator areas of arenas, sports and recreational fitness activities, concert venues, and theaters.

For more information about Ontario's updated public health measures and guidance, please check out the EOHU's website at www.eohu.ca/coronavirus.