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**March 31, 2020**

**From the Office of Dr. Joyce Lock, Medical Officer of Health, Southwestern Public Health**

## COVID-19 Update

### Situation Update

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- As of March 28, 2020, Southwestern Public Health (SWPH) has had **8 lab-confirmed cases** of COVID-19. For up-to-date case counts in Oxford and Elgin St. Thomas, visit [www.swpublichealth.ca/partners-and-professionals-update-novel-coronavirus-covid-19](http://www.swpublichealth.ca/partners-and-professionals-update-novel-coronavirus-covid-19)
- Currently, there is no evidence of increasing community transmission of COVID-19 in Oxford and Elgin St. Thomas. There is evidence of community transmission in areas around us. Community transmission will likely be seen locally within the next number of days/weeks.
- To decrease risk of community transmission of COVID-19 infections during this crucial time, anyone who has new cold-like respiratory symptoms (regardless of travel history), and has not been tested for COVID-19, should be advised to self-isolate at home for 14 days, or until their symptoms have resolved, whichever is longer as per the Public Health Agency of Canada.
- Refer to table 1 for specific recommendations for health care workers. These recommendations may change as the pandemic progresses.

### Incubation Period & Period of Communicability

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- The incubation period is estimated to be between 2 and 14 days, with the median at five days.
- The period of communicability is currently unclear but is assumed could extend up to 14 days after symptom onset or until symptoms have resolved, whichever is longer. It is hypothesized that contagiousness is greater earlier in the clinical course i.e. first seven days vs last seven days.

### Recommendations for Health Care Workers

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- On March 19, 2020, Ontario's Chief Medical Officer of Health recommended that all health care workers in the province of Ontario who travelled out of country self-isolate for 14 days upon returning, unless deemed critical to continued operations by all parties. Additionally, the [Ministry of Health released COVID-19 Guidance: Occupational Health and Safety and Infection Prevention & Control](#).
- The recommendations in table 1 (p. 2) were created to provide direction for Health Care Workers. The table is subject to change as the pandemic progresses.

**Table 1: Health Care Worker (HCW) Recommendations for Testing/Quarantine/Self-Isolation/Recovery:  
Note that quarantine = self-isolation while asymptomatic**

<b>HCW with International Travel</b>	Asymptomatic^^ – not critical employee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>14 days self-isolation since arrival in Canada.</li> </ul>
	Asymptomatic – critical employee^	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>14 days self-isolation preferred but can work if:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Regular screening</li> <li>✓ Use of PPE for 14 days</li> <li>✓ Active self-monitoring</li> <li>✓ Immediately self-isolate if symptoms develop &amp; report to Occupational Health</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
	Symptomatic with no testing	<p><b>Should be tested asap</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If no testing is done, self-isolation for 14 days from symptom onset <b>OR</b> Self-isolation until 24 hours after symptom resolution. May then return to work with appropriate PPE until 14 days from symptom onset; AND outside of work, continue self-isolation until 14 days from symptom onset.</li> </ul>
	Symptomatic with positive lab test for COVID-19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Self-isolation until two negative swabs, obtained 24 hours apart <b>OR</b></li> <li>If no longer doing clearance swabs, self-isolation until 14 days from symptom onset <b>OR</b></li> <li>If deemed critical for operations may return to work 24 hours after symptom resolution; AND continue to use PPE until 2 negative swabs obtained 24 hours apart (if no longer doing clearance swabs, continue until 14 days from symptom onset); AND outside of work, continue self-isolation until 14 days from symptom onset.</li> </ul>
	Symptomatic with negative lab test for COVID-19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue self-isolation until 14 days since arrival in Canada.</li> <li>If deemed critical^, return to work 24 hours after symptom resolution with PPE until 14 days since arrival in Canada; AND outside of work, continue self-isolation until 14 days since arrival in Canada.</li> </ul>
<b>HCW with No International Travel or Exposures</b>	Asymptomatic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No quarantine required.</li> </ul>
	Symptomatic with no testing	<p><b>Should be tested asap.</b></p> <p>If no testing is done,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>self-isolation for 14 days from symptom onset <b>OR</b></li> <li>Self-isolation until 24 hours after symptom resolution. May then return to work with appropriate PPE until 14 days from symptom onset; AND outside of work, continue self-isolation until 14 days from symptom onset.</li> </ul>
	Symptomatic with positive lab test for COVID-19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Self-isolation until 2 negative swabs, (clearance swabs), obtained 24 hours apart <b>OR</b></li> <li>If no longer doing clearance swabs, self-isolation until 14 days from symptom onset <b>OR</b></li> <li>If deemed critical for operations, may return to work 24 hours after symptom resolution; AND continue to use PPE until 2 negative swabs obtained 24 hours apart (if no longer doing</li> </ul>

		clearance swabs, continue until 14 days from symptom onset); AND outside of work, continue self-isolation until 14 days from symptom onset.
	Symptomatic with negative lab test for COVID-19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Self-isolation until 24 hours after symptom resolution.</li> </ul>
<b>HCW with High risk Exposure* to Laboratory Confirmed COVID-19 Case</b>	Asymptomatic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>14 days of quarantine since last exposure to case.</li> <li>If deemed critical<sup>^</sup>, can return to work with appropriate PPE and self-monitoring; AND outside of work, continue quarantine until 14-day quarantine is complete</li> </ul>
	Symptomatic with no testing	<p><b>Should be tested asap.</b></p> <p>If no testing is done:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Self-isolation for 14 days from symptom onset <b>OR</b></li> <li>Self-isolation until 24 hours after symptom resolution. May then return to work with appropriate PPE until 14 days from symptom onset; AND outside of work, continue self-isolation until 14 days from symptom onset.</li> </ul>
	Symptomatic with positive lab test for COVID-19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Self-isolation until 2 negative swabs, obtained 24 hours apart <b>OR</b></li> <li>If no longer doing clearance swabs, self-isolation until 14 days from symptom onset <b>OR</b></li> <li>If deemed critical for operations may return to work 24 hours after symptom resolution; AND continue to use PPE until 2 negative swabs obtained 24 hours apart (if no longer doing clearance swabs, continue until 14 days from symptom onset); AND outside of work, continue self-isolation until 14 days from symptom onset.</li> </ul>
	Symptomatic with negative lab test	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complete 14 days of self-isolation since last exposure.</li> <li>If deemed critical<sup>^</sup>, return to work 24 hours after symptom resolution with PPE until 14 days of self-isolation since last exposure is complete; AND outside of work, continue self-isolation until 14 days since last exposure.</li> </ul>

For a HCW who tested positive while asymptomatic, and was tested outside of the above recommendations, they can return to work immediately; AND continue with appropriate PPE at work until 2 negative swabs (if no longer doing clearance swabs, continue until 14 days after positive test result); AND outside of work, continue self-isolation until 14 days from day of testing.

<sup>^</sup> critical employee: deemed critical, by all parties including local public health

<sup>^^</sup> asymptomatic = resolution of symptoms that are reasonably likely to be attributed to active COVID-19 infection (e.g. a post-viral cough may persist)

\*high risk exposure = provided direct care to confirmed case without consistent use of appropriate PPE or household contact of a confirmed case

References: Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit; COVID-19 Guidance: Occupational Health and Safety and Infection Prevention & Control, Ministry of Health; Public health management of cases and contacts of COVID-19 in Ontario (version 5.0); Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health Memo RE: Managing Health Worker Illness and Return to Work COVID-19

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