



“Close” Contact ... OR NOT?

Questions & Answers

I might have been exposed to someone who has tested positive for COVID-19. What happens now?

Peterborough Public Health (PPH) understands that a COVID-19 diagnosis can be stressful for the individual who has tested positive and for those whom they may have been in close contact with. The following are the steps PPH takes when a positive COVID-19 result is received:

1. Once PPH has been notified, a public health nurse will then follow-up with the individual to:
 - Let the person know they have tested positive
 - Answer any questions they have, provide education and advise of the need to self-isolate for a specified duration of time
 - Try to determine how they may have been exposed to COVID-19
 - Determine the places they went while infectious (e.g. to work or public places) and who their close contacts are. PPH may need to speak with others to assess risk e.g. employer
2. A public health nurse will then follow-up with close contacts to advise them of the situation and advise them to immediately self-isolate for 14 days from the last day of exposure to the case. It may also be recommended that they seek assessment and testing for COVID-19.
3. Close contacts will also be provided information on how to self-monitor for symptoms and what to do if they do develop symptoms over the 14 days. **Due to the way COVID-19 spreads to others, only close contacts are at additional risk which is why PPH will only contact close contacts.**

What is a close contact?

‘Close contact’ means being less than 2 metres away in the same room, workspace, or area for more than 15 minutes with a confirmed case of COVID-19, starting from 48 hours before the person began having symptoms or 48 hours before the test day for people who did not have symptoms.

What happens if the individual was out in the community (e.g., at work, place of worship, or at a grocery store) while infectious?

If a person was in contact with others while infectious, PPH will determine whether there was any increased risk of exposure to others.

A transient interaction (e.g., walking past someone who tested positive) does not pose an increased risk. PPH will consult others if additional information is needed or if any other measures need to be taken to reduce the risk of transmission.

What if I am still worried and have not been contacted by PPH?

If you have not been contacted but you are concerned that you have been exposed to COVID-19, testing is available. Currently, the Kinsmen Centre Drive Through testing site is operating Monday - Friday 9:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. for individuals with no symptoms. You can arrive by car, bike or foot and no appointment is necessary. If you have no symptoms, it is safe to wait until the site is open and go at a time that is convenient for you. Testing is a choice that is yours to make. It is not considered to be an urgent matter.

If you are experiencing any sign or symptom of COVID-19, you should seek prompt assessment and testing at the PRHC Assessment Centre. To book an appointment please call 705-876-5086. Self-isolate yourself immediately and continue to do so until results are available.

You can refer to the Peterborough Public Health website or social media channels to see what current testing options are available. If you have any other general questions related to COVID-19 please call Peterborough Public Health 705-743-1000 Monday - Friday to speak with a Public Health Nurse.

Will a negative test mean that I am COVID-free?

If you test negative WITH SYMPTOMS for COVID-19, that means that you did not have detectable virus at the time your sample was collected. It does not mean that you will not be exposed to, test positive for or become sick with COVID-19 at any time after your test. You should continue to practice physical distancing and keep monitoring for COVID-19 symptoms and get tested again if they develop.

If you test negative WITH NO SYMPTOMS, you CAN continue your usual activities, including work, and should follow routine precautions including wearing a cloth mask in public when physical distancing is not possible, and cleaning your hands often.

I learned about this case from social media – is Peterborough Public Health going to alert the public about this?

PPH would alert the public of an outbreak in any facility, clinic, business or public setting where there is a health risk to the public.

When there is a low risk to the public, PPH encourages the facility to disclose this information to reassure the public they are working with public health and taking the necessary measures to control the spread of infection.

For questions or more information, call **705-743-1000** or visit peterboroughpublichealth.ca/covid19