

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS
Long-Term Care (LTC) Home Surveillance Testing
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OVERVIEW

INDIVIDUAL	LOCAL PUBLIC HEALTH UNIT LEVEL				
	Green- Prevent	Yellow- Protect	Orange- Restrict	Red- Control	Lockdown
Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tested twice monthly 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tested weekly 		
Volunteers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tested twice monthly 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tested weekly 		
Caregivers				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide proof of a negative COVID-19 test result in the past week and verbally attest to not subsequently testing positive 	
Support workers providing direct care to residents				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Verbally attest to a negative COVID-19 test result in the past two weeks, not subsequently testing positive 	
Support workers <u>not</u> providing direct care to residents				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Verbally attest to a negative COVID-19 test result in the past two weeks, not subsequently testing positive 	
General Visitors visiting indoors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not applicable; visits not permitted. 				

APPLICABILITY

Q1. Who is considered staff?

All individuals in the LTC home who meet the definition of staff under the *Long-Term Care Homes Act, 2007* should be tested, unless they have previously tested positive for COVID-19 (see question 4 below).

Under the *Long-Term Care Homes Act, 2007*, "staff", in relation to a LTC home, means persons who work at the home:

- as employees of the licensee,
- pursuant to a contract or agreement with the licensee, or
- pursuant to a contract or agreement between the licensee and an employment agency or other third party;

Q2. Should placement students be tested?

Placement students should be tested in accordance with the staff/ volunteer testing requirements, unless they have previously tested positive for COVID-19 (see question 4 below).

Q3. If an individual has already received a negative test result for COVID-19, should they be retested?

Yes, individuals should be retested, unless they have previously tested positive for COVID-19 (see question 4 below). Ongoing testing of all individuals in LTC homes will help provide a safe environment in the home.

Testing is done at a point in time. Existing literature indicates that the incubation period (the time from exposure to development of symptoms) of COVID-19 ranges from 2–14 days. Retesting is necessary because the virus may not be detectable when the person was originally tested. In addition, the person may have come into contact with another person (who was symptomatic or asymptomatic) to the virus in the time after the earlier test.

Q4. If an individual previously tested positive for COVID-19, should they be tested again?

An individual that has previously had laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 AND was cleared by the local PHU, should generally not be re-tested for surveillance purposes due to persistent shedding. Previously cleared individuals should continue to follow public health guidance for COVID-19 prevention, including self-isolating after high risk exposures to cases.

Re-testing after clearance should generally only be done with new onset of symptoms of COVID-19, and can be considered if there is exposure to a confirmed case of COVID-19 or in an outbreak and/or at the direction of the local PHU.

WHERE TO GET TESTED

Q5. Where can staff or volunteers be tested?

If testing in the long-term care home is not feasible, local Assessment Centres or participating pharmacies can be used. Staff/volunteers going to an Assessment Centre or pharmacy for testing must be provided with the assigned home-specific investigation (INV) number for use by the [Assessment Centre or participating pharmacy.](#)

Q6. Where can caregivers and support workers be tested?

Homes are not required to offer caregiver or support worker testing on-site; however, homes may do so if they have sufficient capacity.

Caregivers and support workers may get tested at an [Assessment Centre or participating pharmacy](#).

TESTING AT THE LTC HOMES

Q7. Do individuals need to provide consent every time they are tested?

The health practitioner administering the COVID-19 test must obtain the consent of the individual in accordance with the *Health Care Consent Act, 1996*. An individual must consent to a test for COVID-19 before the test can be administered— this includes staff, students and volunteers, as well as any caregiver or support worker being tested.

Q8. What happens if a staff/volunteer refuses to be tested for COVID-19?

The health and safety of workers is a top concern during the COVID-19 outbreak. Testing results help LTC homes protect individuals in the home (e.g., staff, volunteers, residents, etc.) from exposure to infectious diseases. Homes should follow their policies and procedures related to staff/volunteer refusal.

PROOF OF NEGATIVE TEST RESULT

Q9. What is considered proof of a negative test result?

Proof of a negative COVID-19 test result may be provided by showing the home the results of the test (e.g. printout or on a mobile device showing the individual's name, test date and result).

Homes must ensure that they obtain the individual's consent for the collection of this personal health information in accordance with the *Personal Health Information Protection Act, 2004* (PHIPA) and that any subsequent use or disclosure complies with PHIPA.

Q10. What happens if the caregiver or support worker refuses to provide proof of a negative test result?

Individuals must consent to providing their COVID-19 test results. If a caregiver or a support worker who provides direct care to residents refuses to provide proof of a negative test result to the home, the home should not grant them entry to visit, whether the visit is indoors or outdoors.

Q11. Can homes ask a person visiting a very ill or palliative resident to provide proof of or attest to a negative COVID-19 test result?

Homes should not ask a person who is visiting a very ill or palliative resident to provide proof of or attest to receiving a negative COVID-19 test result.

CONTACTS FOR MORE INFORMATION

Surveillance, On-Site Testing, PPE

For information about asymptomatic surveillance (such as, investigation [INV] numbers), on-site testing at the LTC home or PPE requirements and sourcing, contact your established regional contact at Ontario Health at one of the following email addresses below:

Region	Email
West	OHWestTesting@lhins.on.ca
Central	COVID19TestingCentral@lhins.on.ca
Toronto	TRTestingIntake@tc.lhins.on.ca
East	CovidtestingEast@ontariohealth.ca
North	OHNTesting@lhins.on.ca

Swab Test Kits

To obtain swab testing kits, contact your local/regional distribution source or use the online request form, available [here](#), to obtain them directly from Public Health Ontario.

Lab Test Results for Staff

Local PHUs will notify the LTC home of any positive results. Any individual with a green Ontario health card (photo card) seeking results of COVID-19 lab tests (including staff members of LTC homes) may visit the [COVID-19 Test Results Website](#). This web-based tool provides access to COVID-19 test results from the Ministry of Health.

For any additional information or questions on staff testing

Please contact the Ministry of Long-Term Care Home Action Line/Family Support Line, at [1-866-434-0144](#), between 8:30 am and 7:00 pm, seven days a week.