

IMPORTANT UPDATES ON COVID-19

To: Physicians, Nurse Practitioners, Nurses, and Midwives
Hospital Infection Control Departments and Emergency Departments

The COVID-19 Interim Guidance: **Omicron Surge Management of Staffing in Highest-Risk Settings**, [EN](#) / [FR](#) was updated and released last evening.

The main change is that the lowest-risk guidance can now be used for routine operations when there is no staffing shortage. Thus, highest risk settings can now use this chart:

Table 1: Return to Work Testing Requirements for Cases and Contacts

1A: Lowest COVID-19 Transmission Risk Staffing Option (For Routine Operations)

Asymptomatic Close Contacts		Cases
Testing available	Testing not available	With or Without Testing Available
<p>1) Return to work following a negative molecular test (e.g. PCR, rapid molecular) collected on/after day 5 from last exposure.¹</p> <p>OR</p> <p>2) Return to work following a negative molecular test (e.g. PCR, rapid molecular) prior to first shift (if collected before day 5)² AND perform daily rapid antigen testing for 10 days after last exposure or until a second negative molecular test is collected on/after day 5 from last exposure.^{1,3}</p>	<p>1) Return to work 10 days after last exposure.¹</p>	<p>1) Return to work 10 days after symptom onset or positive test (whichever is earlier).</p> <p>OR</p> <p>2) Return to work after a single negative molecular test (e.g. PCR, rapid molecular) or two negative rapid antigen tests are collected 24 hours apart any time prior to end of time-based clearance (10 days).³</p> <p>AND</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No fever and symptoms improving for 24 hours (48 hours if vomiting/diarrhea).

¹ "Last exposure" refers to last day the contact was exposed to an individual who was still isolating with either COVID-19 symptoms or a positive test result (e.g. household contacts would have ongoing exposure until the end of the cases isolation period if unable to effectively self-isolate in the home. If a child with COVID-19 was self-isolating from Monday to Saturday, the 'last exposure' for the parent who was caring for the COVID-19 positive child would be the Saturday).

² Follow [workplace measures](#) for reducing risk of exposure.

³ If the individual tests positive on a test before day 10, they should not continue testing on subsequent days and wait until day 10 prior to returning to work. Routine molecular testing of positive cases is NOT recommended due to the high likelihood of ongoing positivity, but may be considered if initial test was indeterminate or low level positive.

The document also contains two other charts for return to work testing scenarios for critical staffing shortages.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact your local Timiskaming Health Unit:

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