

UHN Health Services - COVID-19 Processes FAQs

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Reporting Exposures, Symptoms and COVID-Positivity

How do I contact Health Services?

Health Services COVID-19 Information - As the COVID-19 situation continues to evolve, the information on this page will be continually updated. Check back often for the latest updates.

- UPDATED Health Services COVID-19 [Toolkit for Staff](#)
- Submit a question to Health Services OR call 416-979-4441 to leave a voicemail – calls are returned within 48 hours
- [Report your COVID-19 positive result](#)
- [Report your COVID-19 symptoms](#)
- [Report your exposure to someone with COVID-19](#)
- [COVID-19 Clearance Return to Work Declaration Form](#)
- Rapid antigen test kit: [How to use](#) | [FAQ](#)
- [Submit your COVID-19 Vaccine Receipt](#)
- Visit Health Services page on the UHN Intranet to access the forms required to report COVID-19-positivity, symptoms, and exposure to COVID-19
- All forms can be accessed externally with the direct link
- The Health Services COVID-19 Toolkit is updated regularly. Answers to many common questions can be found in the toolkit

When do I contact Health Services?

1. If you have tested positive for COVID-19 through either a PCR test or a Rapid Antigen Test (RAT)
2. If you have had a high-risk exposure to someone who is COVID-19 positive
3. If you are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19

Note – You must report each new change to your status separately, so your return-to-work date can be adjusted, payroll can be corrected and manager is notified. For example, if you had an exposure and become positive, you need to report your positive results even if you are off work already.

I've tested positive for COVID-19— now what?

1. Positive staff members are required to isolate and [inform Health Service](#).
2. You cannot enter UHN hospitals while you are isolating. The isolation period is 10 days from the onset of your COVID-19 symptoms. Your isolation period is considered over on day 11.

A person in my household has tested positive. What do I have to do?

You have had a high-risk exposure. You are required to isolate and [inform Health Service](#).

You will need to quarantine for 10 days following your break in contact from a household member. If you can isolate from the infected person, that is considered your break in contact. If you cannot isolate from the positive person – your break in contact begins on the last day that your household member is considered infectious.

I've had a high-risk exposure. What do I do?

You must isolate and [inform Health Service](#).

Non-Household and/or One-Time Exposure

If your exposure is with someone outside your household, with whom you are no longer in contact, you must [inform Health Service](#), take a PCR test after the “break in contact” (i.e., After you are no longer in contact with the individual.)

Household and/or On-Going Exposure

If you cannot break contact with the COVID-positive individual (for example, an individual you live with):

If COVID-positive individual is fully vaccinated (two doses):

- “Break in Contact” for the exposed TeamUHN member is NOW defined as 5 days after the COVID-positive person’s symptoms started, or if they are asymptomatic, 5 days after their positive test result
- Your 10-day quarantine begins after that 5-day period, so your quarantine total is 15 days

If COVID-positive individual is NOT fully vaccinated:

- “Break in Contact” is NOW defined as 10 days after COVID positive household members symptoms started, or if asymptomatic, 10 days after their positive test result
- Your 10-day quarantine begins after the 10 days, so your quarantine total is 20 days

Note – You may have seen shorter quarantine days being required in the community. The rules are different for health care workers, so your quarantine period may be longer than other people in your circle.

I am unsure if my exposure is considered high-risk. What should I do?

An exposure is considered high-risk when you are within two metres of the COVID positive individual for more than 15 minutes, without appropriate PPE.

If you are unsure, you can complete the [HS COVID-19 Assessment and Return to Work Guidance form](#). Based on your answers, Health Services will let you know if further action is required.

I have been exposed to someone who has been exposed to COVID-19. Should I contact Health Services? Do I qualify for a PCR test?

If you have not been directly exposed, this is considered an “exposures of an exposure.” In this situation you do not need to contact Health Services, and do not qualify for a PCR test.

My child is in daycare and has been exposed to another COVID-positive classmate. They are now isolating at home, but do not have any symptoms. Do I have to contact Health Services and isolate?

No, this is also considered an “exposure of an exposure,” and you are not required to contact Health Services.

Do UHN volunteers need to report exposures/COVID positive results to Health Services? If so, how should they do this as they do not have access to the intranet.

Yes, like anyone working at UHN, volunteers are required to report exposures and/or COVID-positive results to Health Services. All of the relevant forms created by Health Services, which are posted on the intranet can be accessed externally. Managers can forward the links to volunteers to complete themselves.

What happens after I have submitted a form to Health Services?

You will receive an automated email message with more information on your specific situation and next steps. Your manager will also receive an automated message.

Note - Everything that you submit to Health Services is an attestation that goes into your employee file. Please ensure the information you submit is accurate.

What does “fully vaccinated” mean? Do I need a booster shot to be considered fully vaccinated?

Two doses of a COVID-19 vaccine is currently considered “fully vaccinated” at UHN, and as per our vaccine requirements for all staff. However, a booster dose is strongly recommended to all staff, to give yourself the best possible protection against the current strain of COVID-19.

If someone has had a low-risk exposure to an asymptomatic team member and has received a negative result on a RAT test, do they still need to report the exposure to Health Services?

No. Staff members are not required to report low-risk exposures at work.

My co-worker had a similar situation to me, but was given different instructions for testing and isolation. Why?

As the provincial guidelines change, as well as the evolving staffing situation at UHN, we’re adjusting rapidly. So, if you submitted on a different day, you may have different instructions based on the date of submission. There also may be different exposure risks that individuals disclose to Health Services.

Who gets access to the information submitted to Health Services?

Your leader gets return to work details and to substantiate your absence. Toronto Public Health (TPH) and IPAC get all information regarding any test results of a communicable illness including COVID-19.

If it is identified as a workplace acquired infection the information will be shared with the MOLTS (Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development, Workers Safety Insurance board (WSIB), Safety Services, the site Joint Health and Safety Committee (JHSC) or the health and safety representative and the trade union, if any.

Returning to Work

What do I do when it’s time to return to work?

When your isolation period ends, you must fill out a [Return to Work form](#), which can be found on the Intranet.

Will my manager be notified when I am cleared to return to work?

Given the current volumes, Health Services cannot notify managers when employees are cleared to return to work. Staff are expected to return to work on the date their quarantine ends. This information is provided in the instructions staff receive from Health Services when they report an exposure or COVID-positive test result, or symptoms.

What happens if I am still symptomatic after my isolation period is complete?

If you have concerns about ongoing symptoms, you can request to speak to Health Services when you fill out your Return-to-Work form. If you cannot return to work after your isolation period, you must notify your manager directly. Any absence from work following the required isolation period is considered a non-COVID related absence and regular sick process and payment are followed.

What do I do if I've been cleared of COVID, but I have symptoms that are related to an ongoing condition (such as a chronic cough)?

If you continue to have symptoms after your isolation period, you are to follow regular sick time policy.

Testing PCR/RAT

I have had a positive result on a Rapid Assessment Test (RAT). Do I still need a PCR test?

No. A positive result on a RAT is now considered a true positive. You should consider yourself COVID positive, and [inform Health Service](#).

I am symptomatic but have tested negative on a PCR. What now?

Please continue to isolate. You may need to seek medical treatment, as you may have an illness that is not COVID-related, or have a repeat PCR. Please follow regular sick time processes. You cannot come on-site with any symptoms, even with a negative PCR test. You can check the [staff screening app](#) for the latest entrance screening symptoms list.

I have been told to take a RAT before my next 5 shifts. What if I work for two days, then have two days off, then work for 3 days?

The RAT is to be done before you come to work, before your next 5 shifts, and not on your days off unless given specific instructions. Health services or IPAC would advise your leader if there is a need to change testing. Please speak with your leader who can provide the entire team directions.

If I receive a positive COVID test through the TW Assessment Centre, is Health Services automatically informed? What about my manager?

No! You must [inform Health Service](#) of your COVID positive result.

Can I book a PCR test at a UHN site for myself or a member of my household?

Due to the overwhelming volume, all PCR tests are now scheduled through Health Services. There are specific indications for testing and Health Services will let you know if testing is indicated for you or your household family member. Members of your household who are symptomatic or who have been advised by Public Health that they have been exposed and require a PCR test, can also be tested at the TW CAC, by [informing Health Service](#).

I, or a family member, are getting tested at the TW CAC. What do I need to bring?

You must bring your UHN employee ID and your OHIP card to the appointment. You will need to accompany any household members who you are booking an appointment for.

What counts as a household member?

A household member is someone you live with. They can be a family member or a roommate. Family members who you do not live with are not considered household members.

Will testing for staff/household members be expanded to more UHN sites beyond the current COVID Assessment Centre at Toronto Western?

Additional testing sites would require additional staffing, and much like every department across the organization, staffing remains a challenge. However, we are always looking at different opportunities to be able to help support TeamUHN.

Will Health Services provide RATs to employees who require to return to work before the end of their quarantine period?

Yes. Health Services will coordinate with the units RATS to employees who require a test to return to work. For staff who get a PCR test at the TW CAC (and require a RAT), you will receive your RAT at the Assessment Centre. For everyone else, Health Services will provide directions about how you can get a test.

Can I share the RATs that have been provided to me with my friends and family?

DO NOT share RATs with friends or family members. Health Services is monitoring who requires RATs and who is getting them. Supply of RATs remains very limited province-wide, and we need to ensure that health care workers who require these tests to perform critical hospital duties have the tests they need. Staff who do not work on site may be redeployed to onsite work and maybe required to test before attending their redeployed work assignment.

I've heard that RATs may perform better at detecting Omicron if the swab is used both nasally and in the throat. What method of swabbing is recommended?

The swabs included with the RATs are for nasal specimen collection only. We ask that you stick to the product instructions provided by the test manufacturer and swab nasally. The research on using the nasal swabs orally has not been verified and the RAT kits we have at UHN have not been approved for this type of use.