

What to do if Your Child has Symptoms of Illness

Instructions for caregivers

To reduce the risk of COVID-19 it is important that students and staff with any symptoms of illness do not attend school until they are no longer at risk of spreading infection. Schools must send anyone home from school who appears to be unwell and report information to Northwestern Health Unit. If your child is staying home because of illness or has been sent home from school because of illness, keep them home, limit contact with others, seek medical advice as necessary, and follow the instructions below.



When to get tested

Every student needs to be screened daily before going to school, use the tool at: <https://covid-19.ontario.ca/school-screening/>. The tool will recommend testing if your child has any symptom of COVID-19 that is new, worsening, and not related to other known causes or conditions such as allergies, anxiety, or a chronic illness.

Anyone tested because of the online tool instructions or because a health care provider recommended testing must self-isolate while waiting for test results and cannot attend school in person. Self-isolation is also required for anyone who has travelled outside of Canada in the last 14 days; has tested positive for COVID-19; has been in close contact with someone who currently has COVID-19; or has been told by a health care provider that they should be isolating.

Where to get tested

Visit <https://www.nwhu.on.ca/covid19/Pages/self-assessment.aspx> to find testing information for your community.

If your child tests positive:

- Northwestern Health Unit will call you to gather details about your child's contacts. If your child has been in the school during the infectious period, NWHU will contact the school to get information about school contacts.
- A "contact" is defined as someone who has spent at least 15 minutes within 2 metres of a confirmed case. NWHU will give you and all close contacts direction on self-isolating.

If you choose not to get your child tested:

They should isolate for 14 days, unless **all** the following apply:

- a doctor diagnosed them with another illness
- they do not have a fever (without using medication)
- it has been at least 24 hours since their symptoms started improving (if they had symptoms)



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What if my child was sent home, but I know this is just a regular symptom of a chronic condition like allergies?

Complete the screening tool online, and your child may attend school if they pass the screen. You should talk with your child's school to ensure awareness of chronic conditions that may appear to be COVID-19 symptoms.

What if I think its just a common cold?

If a student has symptoms of a cold or the flu, then COVID-19 testing is recommended. A doctor or nurse practitioner won't be able to determine whether a student has COVID-19 without a test.

When can my child return to school?

- **No test:** They should isolate and not return to school for 14 days, unless a doctor or nurse practitioner has diagnosed them with another illness AND they do not have a fever (without using medication) AND it has been 24 hours since their symptoms started improving (if they had symptoms).
- **Negative test:** They can return to school if they do not have a fever (without using medication) AND it has been at least 24 hours since their symptoms started improving (if they had symptoms). Exception: if NWHU has talked to your family and given other instructions, follow those instructions.
- **If positive test:** return to school at the direction of Northwestern Health Unit. A negative test as proof of clearance is not required.
- **A medical note or proof of negative test is not required to return to school.**

***What if a close contact of a student (e.g. sibling, parent) tests positive?**

If a student is identified as a close contact of a positive case, they should go home immediately to self-isolate and arrange for testing. If a student is self-isolating after a high-risk exposure (e.g. a close contact of a known COVID-19 case) they can return to school at the end of their full 14 day self-isolation period as they may be incubating COVID-19. If they should develop symptoms or test positive, then they will be managed as a case of COVID-19.

If my child is ill, do other household members also need to isolate while waiting for test results, or can siblings attend school and parents go to work?

Currently the risk of COVID-19 is low in the region. Parents and siblings can attend school and go to work as long as they do not have symptoms of COVID-19 and they have not been directed to isolate by public health (Northwestern Health Unit).

***If you have questions, please call the
NWHU COVID-19 Hotline at 1-866-468-2240.***

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