



Health, Seniors and Active Living

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RE: Updated Guidance for Health Care Providers regarding COVID-19

On June 21, restrictions that previously limited occupancy to 50 per cent of normal business levels or one person per 10 square metres were lifted for all health professions. The lifting of this occupancy restriction was not a return to normal business. Measures to ensure that members of the public are reasonably able to maintain separation of at least two metres from others, except for brief exchanges are still required. Please refer to page 22 https://manitoba.ca/asset_library/en/proactive/2020_2021/restoring-safe-services.pdf for additional guidelines that remain in place for health professions.

Up-to-date information, data and resources, including screening tools, to assist health care providers in determining when COVID-19 testing is recommended as well as exclusion criteria for entering public premises (e.g., workplaces, day cares, schools, etc.) is available at www.Manitoba.ca/COVID19. Evidence suggests that people largely follow their health care provider's advice. **Please continue to strongly advise your patients presenting with cold, influenza-like-illness (ILI) or any COVID-19 symptoms, to not go to work, school, daycare or other public settings while ill.** This message is vital as we prepare for the co-circulation of influenza and COVID-19 this fall.

If you suspect your patient has a respiratory tract infection, regardless of how mild their symptoms, offer testing to rule out COVID-19.

- **If they decline COVID-19 testing:** they must be advised to isolate for a minimum of 10 days from symptom onset and 24 hours after their symptoms have resolved.
- **If their COVID-19 test result is negative:** they can be advised to discontinue isolation 24 hours after they are afebrile and their symptoms have resolved (provided they do not have an exposure history—i.e., close contact with a case or recent travel—see below for further details).
- **If their COVID-19 test result is positive:** they will be contacted by Public Health with further directions.

Anyone who has been advised by Public Health to self-isolate (quarantine) due to close contact with a case or, who is subject to travel restrictions, must complete the 14 day self-isolation period, even if their COVID-19 test result is negative. Failure to self-isolate in accordance with public health advice is a violation of public health orders issued August 28, 2020 and is enforceable under the Public Health Act. Individuals could be subject to fines for non-compliance. Note: federal and provincial travel restrictions are subject to change in

accordance with the Federal Quarantine Act and provincial public health orders; up-to-date information (including exemptions) is available at: www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/latest-travel-health-advice.html and www.manitoba.ca/covid19/soe.html, respectively.

Evidence now supports limiting isolation to 10 days post-symptom onset provided they are afebrile and symptoms have resolved. This change in practice is consistent with current national guidance and evidence on period of communicability/infectiousness for mild COVID-19 cases. *The Interim Guidance for Public Health Measures: Managing COVID-19 Cases and Contacts in Community* (https://manitoba.ca/asset_library/en/coronavirus/interim_guidance.pdf) was updated August 12 to reflect this change. Manitoba previously used 14 days isolation post-symptom onset. Please note that the absence of cough is not required for the case to end isolation for those known to have chronic cough or for those experiencing reactive airways post-infection. Loss of sense of smell or taste can also persist beyond the 10 days, but this alone would not require ongoing isolation. In general, repeat laboratory testing (i.e., a negative test result) as the basis for discontinuing home isolation is not recommended. Please note that the length of time to self-isolate (quarantine) for people with a possible exposure to COVID-19 (i.e., contact to a case or recent travel), remains unchanged at 14 days post-exposure.

Please be reminded that those who work in a health care setting may need to meet additional requirements before returning to their workplace. For cases that are health care workers (HCWs), public health should notify and consult with Occupational Health at the end of the isolation period to determine any additional requirements before the HCW returns to the workplace. In general, HCWs can return to work without additional laboratory testing 10 days after the onset of their first symptom provided that their symptoms have resolved for at least 72 hours. If symptoms persist, consult Occupational Health on return to work guidance.

Sincerely,



Dr. Brent Roussin, MD, JD, MPH, FRCPC
Manitoba Chief Provincial Public Health Officer
Manitoba Health, Seniors and Active Living