

# Procedures for Respiratory Illnesses (e.g., Influenza (flu), Respiratory Syncytial Virus, COVID-19, etc.)

November 27, 2023

Public health paused contact tracing requirements in early 2022. Per the Ministry of Health the focus of case and contact management are for residents who are most vulnerable, including those associated with [high-risk settings](#) (e.g. hospitals, long term care).

To help stop the spread of respiratory viruses, including [Influenza \(flu\)](#) and [COVID-19](#), **anyone who feels sick should stay home** and complete the [self-assessment tool](#) to learn more about what to do next. [The flu shot is recommended for everyone six months of age and older.](#)

[You should stay home until all of the following apply to you:](#)

- Your symptoms have been improving for at least 24 hours (or 48 hours if you had nausea, vomiting and/or diarrhea)
- You do not have a fever for 24 hours

When your symptoms are improving and you are no longer isolating at home, following the Precautions below provides extra protection against the spread of COVID-19 and other respiratory viruses circulating in the community.

## Precautions

For **10 days** after your symptoms started:

1. Wear a [well-fitted mask](#) in all public settings
2. Avoid non-essential activities where you need to take off your mask (for example, playing a wind instrument in music class or removing your mask for sports or dining out)
3. Avoid non-essential visits to anyone who is immunocompromised or may be at higher risk of illness (for example, seniors)
4. Avoid non-essential visits to highest risk settings in the community such as hospitals and long-term care homes

Call your healthcare provider if:

1. You don't start to feel better after a few days
2. Your symptoms get worse
3. You are at high risk of developing flu-related complications and develop flu symptom

For more information on **signs and symptoms** and **tips on how to avoid spreading the flu**, please refer to the Government of Ontario website on [The Flu](#).

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## COVID-19/Respiratory Illness Procedures

Please review the following table and isolate if applicable:

Individuals with COVID-19 Symptoms – please see <a href="#">specific symptoms</a> and <a href="#">isolation guidance</a>	Individuals with symptoms are recommended to self-isolate and to stay at home until fever is resolved and their symptoms have been improving for at least 24 hours (48 hours for gastrointestinal symptoms). Refer to the “Precautions” above. Symptomatic individuals should notify their close contacts. You may return to campus once you have completed the isolation period. No testing is required.
Individuals who test positive but are asymptomatic	<b>Isolation is not required if individuals remain asymptomatic.</b> Same recommendation per above to mask and avoid vulnerable individuals and settings for 10 days. Isolate immediately if symptoms develop. Refer to “Individuals with COVID-19 Symptoms” and “Precautions” above.
Individuals who are close contacts of the symptomatic or positive case	<b>No isolation required regardless of vaccination status.</b> Isolate immediately if symptoms develop – refer to “Individuals with COVID-19 Symptoms.” Follow “Precautions” listed above even when symptomless. For directions on what to do if you are a close contact or have been exposed to COVID-19, take the <a href="#">Ontario Ministry of Health’s COVID-19 Self-Assessment</a> .

- 1. Absence reporting:**
  - **Faculty, librarians and staff:** Ensure that you report your absence to your Manager, Supervisor, Director, Department Head.
- 2. Notifications/communications:** If you are symptomatic, or COVID-19 positive and attend group settings (e.g., childcare, school, in-person work), public health does not consider contacts in those settings (e.g., the classroom cohort) to be high risk close contacts. Therefore, **no cohort notification is required.** It is highly recommended that individuals complete the [provincial health screening](#) tool prior to coming to campus.
  - Classes do not need to be cancelled and staff do not need to be sent home.
- 3. Cleaning and disinfection:** Transmission from touching surface is not the dominant mode of transmission. However, individuals may disinfect their own areas to the extent feasible (e.g., door knobs, handles etc.) if applicable. For additional information, please refer to Facilities and Services.