



April 23, 2020

To all Ottawa-area Community Associations,

Thank you to the residents of Ottawa who continue to support planking the curve – staying home and keeping physical distance. We can change the impact that this pandemic has on our city when we all work together.

It is important to recognize that the COVID-19 situation is evolving very quickly. Please refer to OttawaPublicHealth.ca/Coronavirus to stay up-to-date on the latest information.

The actions that members of your groups and organizations are taking will save lives and make a difference for your friends, family, neighbours, and colleagues. Remember that COVID-19 affects everyone: regardless of age and current health status. It is important for all of us to continue to practice physical distancing. This means:

- Stay home as much as possible. Only leave your property for essential travel such as grocery shopping or visiting a pharmacy;
- Stay at least 2 metres (6 feet) away from people outside of your household;
- **Wash your hands** with soap and water thoroughly and often;
- Do not touch your face with unwashed hands;
- Clean phones and other devices, and frequently touched surfaces regularly.

For more information on physical distancing visit: OttawaPublicHealth.ca/PhysicalDistancing

Masks

Medical masks and N95 respirators should not be worn by healthy community members.

Wearing **non-medical masks** may offer additional protection, especially when physical distancing is hard to maintain (e.g. in a grocery store, on the bus). Non-medical masks may include those that are made from cloth (for example cotton); those that have pockets to insert filters; and those that are used to cover other masks or respirators to prolong their use. Wearing a non-medical mask is NOT a replacement for physical distancing, hand washing, and monitoring your health.

For more information about the use of masks to prevent the spread of COVID-19, please visit: OttawaPublicHealth.ca/Masks



Symptoms and Testing Criteria

If you are in distress (e.g. significant trouble breathing, chest pain, fainting, or have a significant worsening of any chronic disease symptoms), do not go to the Assessment Centre or a COVID-19 Care clinic. Go to the nearest Emergency Department or call 9-1-1.

- COVID-19 has **common symptoms** such as fever, cough, or difficulty breathing.
- COVID-19 also has **less common symptoms** such as unexplained fatigue, delirium (a serious medical condition that involves confusion, changes to memory, and odd behaviours), falls, acute functional decline, worsening of chronic conditions, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal pain, chills, headaches, croup, or loss of taste/smell.
- COVID-19 may also present as new or worsening respiratory symptoms such as: sore throat, runny nose, sneezing, nasal congestion, hoarse voice, or difficulty swallowing

The following list of individuals are recommended to be tested for COVID-19 **IF** they have at least one common symptom of COVID-19 **OR** one less common symptom of COVID-19 **OR** one new or worsening respiratory symptom (see list of symptoms above):

- Healthcare workers or staff who work in health care facilities and members of their households;
- Residents and staff in long-term care homes, retirement homes, correctional facilities, homeless shelters, mental health institution, hospice, and other congregate living settings;
- Hospitalized individuals and those who likely will be hospitalized;
- Members of remote, isolated, rural, and/or indigenous communities;
- Caregivers and care providers;
- First responders such as firefighters, police, and paramedics;
- Individuals with frequent healthcare contact such as patients with cancer or undergoing chemotherapy, dialysis therapy, pre- or post-transplant, pregnancy, and newborns.

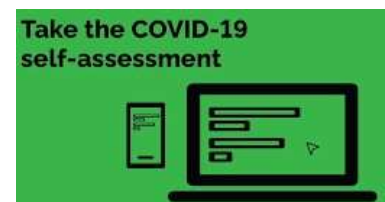
The following list of individuals are recommended to be tested for COVID-19 **IF** they have at least one common symptom of COVID-19 such as fever, cough, or difficulty breathing.

- Close contacts of confirmed or probable cases;
- Returning international travelers who seek medical attention;
- Critical infrastructure workers – this includes grocery stores, food services, maintenance and transportation workers, and utilities.

Patients who meet the criteria above will be **tested** for COVID-19, which involves taking a sample from the throat or nose with a swab.

If you think you have COVID-19 symptoms or have been in close contact with someone who has it, use the [COVID-19 self-assessment tool](#) to help determine how to seek further care

This revised testing criteria has been added to the [Ottawa Public Health website: www.OttawaPublicHealth.ca](http://www.OttawaPublicHealth.ca)



Testing and Treatment Locations

Assessment Centre – Brewer Park

151 Brewer Way

Accessed from Bronson Avenue opposite Carleton University

Open 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., 7 days a week

COVID-19 Care Clinic – Moodie Location

595 Moodie Drive

Monday to Friday, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

COVID-19 Care Clinic – Heron Location

1485 Heron Road

Monday to Friday, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Anyone with serious illness should never hesitate to go to Emergency Departments. The Ottawa-area hospitals all have capacity to provide emergency service to those who need it, and are using strict infection prevention and control measures.

[Helping children cope during the COVID-19 pandemic](#)

Being apart from friends and family can be challenging for everyone. For children and teens, it can be even more difficult. It is important that everyone practice [physical distancing](#), but this idea can be hard for young people to understand. Here are some things parents can do to help their children cope with this situation.

- Reassure them that they are safe;
- Encourage them to ask questions, and to talk about how they feel;
- Be understanding – they may have problems sleeping, be upset, and need extra care and attention;
- Remember that kids look to their parents to feel safe and to know how to respond – reassure them and let them know you'll tackle this together;
- Try to keep to normal routines and schedules – allow them to get outside and have supervised play. This is not a play date, so while out, remind them to keep 2 metres or 6 feet from others;
- Encourage them to keep in touch with their friends or other kids their age through supervised video chats or phone calls;



[Physical Distancing for Parents, Teens, and Children](#)

Physical distancing involves taking steps to limit the number of people with whom you and your family come into close contact. As COVID-19 spreads from person-to-person through direct contact or over short distances by droplets through coughing or sneezing, this is critical to limit the spread of COVID-19 in the community. A person may also get COVID-19 by touching contaminated surfaces and then touching their mouth, nose, or possibly eyes. Though being apart from friends and family can be challenging even for adults, it can feel more like the end of the world for children and teens. Children can be more easily socially distanced than teens, who – quite frankly – push back more out of a need for greater independence.

The concept of physical distancing applies outside your home. Household contacts (people you live with) do not need to distance from each other unless they are sick or have travelled within the past 14 days. Physical distance and emotional distance are not the same. These recommendations are meant to keep physical space from other households, while staying emotionally connected!

[Support for Older Adults](#)

Ontario's Chief Medical Officer of Health is strongly urging those over the age of 70 to stay at home and self-isolate. Follow these general instructions on [self-isolation](#).

While seniors' activity centres across Ottawa have shut down to limit the spread of COVID-19 among the vulnerable older adult population, senior/community centres continue to coordinate volunteers, plan meals, and reach out by phone.



Resources available:

- Ottawa Public Health – [Mental Health and COVID-19](#)
- The Good Companions Seniors Centre offers over the phone programs or learning sessions for older adults and adults with physical disabilities:
 - [Senior Centres Without Walls](#)
 - [A Friendly Voice](#)
 - [The Good Companions](#)
 - [Ottawa Senior Pride Network](#)

For more information on activities and services, please visit our webpage for [Older Adults](#).

[Mental Health and COVID-19](#)

Check in with yourself. It's OK not to be OK. It is normal for situations like these to affect your mental health.

- If you are in crisis, please contact the [Mental Health Crisis Line](#) (24 hours a day/7 days a week) at 613-722-6914 or if outside Ottawa toll-free at 1-866-996-0991.
- If you (or your child) are experiencing thoughts of suicide or harming yourself, please call 9-1-1.

Stay connected to others in different ways. Check in with others by phone or other technology. Find positive coping strategies that work for you. For more resources, please visit our [Mental Health and COVID-19 webpage](#).



Thank you again for all the actions you are taking as a community – these actions matter. Together we are making a difference.