
Government of

Department of Health & Wellness



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To: Physicians, Nurse Practitioners, and Administrators

From: Dr. Heather Morrison, CPHO
Dr. Marguerite Cameron, Epidemiologist

Date: April 11, 2023 (Replaces November 29, 2022)

Subject: Final testing guidance for COVID-19

CC: Dr. Dr. Xiaofeng Ding, Medical Microbiologist, Provincial Laboratory Services
Dr. Kristen Mead, Medical Director, Provincial Laboratory Services

The first COVID-19 Testing Guidance Memo was circulated in March 2020. At that time, PEI did not have the ability to test samples locally and all samples had to be sent off-Island. Since that time, PEI has come to be a national leader in terms of COVID-19 testing capacity, availability, and options (PCR, Abbott ID Now, Lucira, rapid antigen tests). This respiratory season has seen the return of other viruses and in response, testing guidance expanded to consider additional pathogens such as influenza and RSV. This will be the last COVID-19 Testing Guidance Memo for the 2022-23 respiratory season. The following provides current criteria for testing for COVID-19, influenza, RSV, and other respiratory viruses, including RT-PCR, rapid molecular (i.e., Abbott ID Now and Lucira), and rapid antigen screening testing modalities. **This memo is in-line with the respiratory testing communiqué distributed by Provincial Laboratory Services dated November 17, 2022.**

Testing Individuals Previously Positive for COVID-19

Given the detection of immune escape sub-variants of Omicron in PEI, individuals who previously tested positive and have symptoms of COVID-19 can be tested again as early as 60 days after their previous positive test (this has been reduced from 90 days).

FLUVID/RSV PCR Test Eligibility (COVID-19, Flu A, Flu B, and RSV)

- Individuals at higher risk of severe outcomes (individuals 50 years of age and older, anyone with underlying medical conditions that lead to higher risk of severe outcomes or are immunocompromised, pregnant individuals, children under 5 years of age) at the discretion of the ordering provider

- Patients aged 0-5 years presenting to the emergency department and there is concern for RSV, or ordered by a Paediatrician
- Hospitalized patients with respiratory symptoms/influenza- like illness (ILI)
- Outbreak-associated patients (up to four patients per outbreak setting)
- Symptomatic individuals residing in institutions not in outbreak (for example, Long-Term Care, Community Care, Mental Health and Addictions, shelters and transition houses, corrections)
- Requests approved by CPHO or the microbiologist on call

Respiratory Panel PCR (includes 23 respiratory pathogens [Rhinovirus, Parainfluenza viruses, Human metapneumoviruses, COVID-19, Flu A, Flu B, etc.])

- Adult patients in the ICU
- Hospitalized pediatric patients listed as “very sick,” or “Paeds Group”
- Immunocompromised patients with respiratory symptoms/ILI with negative FLUVID/RSV PCR
- Requests approved by CPHO or the microbiologist on call

COVID-19 PCR / Abbott ID Now

- Screening of all hospital admissions not eligible for FLUVID/RSV or respiratory panel PCR to be based on current hospital admissions policy
- Symptomatic pediatric patients not eligible for FLUVID/RSV or respiratory panel PCR
- Symptomatic admissions to Long-Term Care and Community Care (PCR, Abbott ID Now, or Lucira rapid molecular test)
- Symptomatic admissions to Corrections, Mental Health and Addictions
- Requests approved by CPHO or the microbiologist on call

Long-term Care/Community Care/Palliative Care Facilities – Residents – COVID-19

- For current long-term care and community care testing guidance, please consult the Long Term Care and Community Care Facilities Visitation and COVID-19 Guidance located here: <https://www.princeedwardisland.ca/en/information/health-and-wellness/long-term-care-and-community-care-facilities-visitation-and-covid-19>

Correctional Facility Admissions – COVID-19

- For correctional facility testing guidance, please consult current Corrections Guidance for New Admissions and Management of COVID-positive Cases and Close Contacts

Postmortem – COVID-19

- Test upon autopsy for cases with a clinical suspicion of COVID-19. Professional judgment should be used to determine whether postmortem testing is necessary.

Rapid Antigen Screening Tests – COVID-19

- Rapid antigen screening tests are available at Access PEI sites, at all provincial libraries, to students and their families at schools, at pharmacies, and at arenas and recreation centres across

the Island. For an up-to-date list of locations, visit:

<https://www.princeedwardisland.ca/en/information/health-and-wellness/covid-19-rapid-antigen-tests-self-test-kits>

- If an initial rapid antigen test is negative, it should be repeated in 48 hours. Positive results on a rapid antigen test do not need to be confirmed at a provincial testing clinic.

Testing Outside of Guidelines

- Contact the CPHO on call for consideration of testing outside of guidelines for outpatients, including any patients under the care of an ER physician.
- Contact the microbiologist on call for inpatients.

The Chief/Deputy Public Health Officers may be reached through locating at QEH or CPHO 902-368-4996 or CPHO nurse on-call 1-902-213-5824.

Dr. Ding may be contacted Monday – Friday from 8-4 or the pathologist on-call after hours via the QEH switchboard at [902-894-2111](tel:902-894-2111)

Please let us know if you have any questions or clarifications.

Thank you all for your cooperation and dedication to all Islanders over the course of the global COVID-19 pandemic.