

# Provincial Laboratory Services



[src.healthpei.ca/microbiology](http://src.healthpei.ca/microbiology)

**Health PEI**  
One Island Health System

## Updated Testing Guidance for COVID-19

January 12, 2021 (Replaces December 4, 2020)

*This information applies to: Physicians, Nurse Practitioners and Administrators*

The following provides CURRENT AND **NEW CRITERIA (in bold)** for testing for COVID-19 for both routine and stat purposes. **A new COVID-19 virus request form is provided (see Appendix A).**

For further clarity on updated testing and isolation for workers, including health care workers and rotational workers, please visit: <https://www.princeedwardisland.ca/en/information/health-and-wellness/work-isolation>

Pre-travel approval is still required for travelers into PEI. For information, please visit:

<https://www.princeedwardisland.ca/en/information/justice-and-public-safety/pre-travel-approval-process>

### Emergency Department

- Any person presenting with new onset of fever without an alternative explanation or new or worsening cough, sore throat, rhinitis, marked fatigue, shortness of breath, chills, headache, myalgia, or acute loss of sense of smell or taste without an alternative explanation should be tested.
- Patients on self-isolation and undergoing a surgical procedure requiring or may require general anesthetic.

### Community Clinics

- Any person presenting with new onset of fever without an alternative explanation or new or worsening cough, sore throat, rhinitis, marked fatigue, shortness of breath, chills, headache, myalgia, or acute loss of sense of smell or taste without an alternative explanation should be tested.
- Any person who was in close contact with (1) a symptomatic case starting 48 hours prior to the case developing symptoms or (2) a laboratory confirmed asymptomatic case starting 48 hours prior to the day their positive specimen was collected, should be tested 7 days after their last exposure to the case.
- Any person who visited a location in the Atlantic Bubble that is listed for possible COVID-19 exposure at the specified date and time should be tested for a full list of exposure locations within Atlantic Canada, please visit: <https://www.princeedwardisland.ca/en/information/health-and-wellness/possible-exposure-covid-19-within-atlantic-bubble>

Clinical judgement remains important in the differential diagnosis and work-up of individuals presenting with these symptoms, considering both our local epidemiology and the patient's exposure risks. For instance, seasonal allergies or post-immunization fever may be considered as alternative diagnoses.

## **Exposure Notification by the COVID Alert App**

- Any person who has received an exposure notification from the COVID Alert app should be tested.

Cough and Fever clinics are available in Charlottetown and Summerside to provide assessment, alternative explanation for symptoms and symptom management. All clients of the Cough and Fever clinic are being tested. Clinics can be accessed through 811 or referred by a health care provider via email: [Coughandfeverclinic@gov.pe.ca](mailto:Coughandfeverclinic@gov.pe.ca).

Clients can submit an online request for an appointment for COVID-19 testing or Cough and Fever assessment by visiting the website: <https://www.princeedwardisland.ca/en/service/request-an-appointment-for-covid-19-testing-for-pei-residents>

Drop-in testing sites are available at locations across PEI for those with symptoms of COVID-19. Testing is offered on a first-come, first serve basis at these clinics, with no referral necessary.

## **Admitted Patients**

- Any person hospitalized > 48hrs with influenza-like-illness (ILI; fever without an alternate explanation and new or worsening cough, sore throat, joint pain, muscle aches, fatigue).
- Any person admitted to the ICU with a respiratory symptom (if there is a strong non-viral alternative diagnosis, contact the medical microbiologist).
- Patients that would otherwise be on self-isolation and undergoing a surgical procedure requiring or may require general anesthetic.
- Inpatients at QEH Unit 9, Hillsborough Hospital, Provincial Addiction Treatment Facility, and Prince County Hospital Inpatient Psychiatry Unit should be tested on admission (routine test unless symptomatic; if symptomatic for COVID-19, Stat test).

## **Health Care Workers (HCW)**

- Any current HCW with a new cough and/or fever, sore throat, rhinitis, marked fatigue, shortness of breath, chills, headache, myalgia, or acute loss of sense of smell or taste without an alternative explanation should be tested.
- Any current HCW (except in long-term care and community care) arriving to PEI from within Canada – test at 0-1, 4-6, and 9-11 days; HCW must test negative prior to start of work isolation.
- Any current HCW working in long-term care or community care who travel outside of PEI must self-isolate for 14 days on return to PEI and cannot return to work until the period of self-isolation is complete.
- Any current HCW arriving to PEI from anywhere outside of Canada – test at 0-1 and 9-11 days and must self-isolate. Note, HCWs arriving to PEI from anywhere outside of Canada are not permitted to work until they finish their 14-day period of self-isolation.
- Weekly testing of LTC staff (public and private) who work in more than one healthcare site, regardless of how frequent they work in LTC (e.g., staff member who works in LTC once a month would require testing every 7 days). For staff with very infrequent visits (i.e., less than monthly), an alternate approach is to test between 48 and 96 hours prior to working and test again at 7 days. For unscheduled/urgent work, staff can be tested after their work shift and again at 7 days.
- Weekly testing of Microbiology staff at the QEH.

Health Care Workers can be assessed for testing by calling: 1-855-354-4358.

Locum physicians, returning physicians, medical residents or medical students that require testing prior to work should reach out to their medical director or coordinator. There is a QEH form (Appendix B) that can be filled out and emailed to [QEHADmitting@ihis.org](mailto:QEHADmitting@ihis.org) for on-site QEH testing until 10PM daily.

## **Long-term Care/Community Care/Palliative Care Facilities – Residents**

- Test residents of long-term care, community care, or palliative care facility 24-48 hours before transfer/admission to the facility, at 3 to 4 days, and at 10 to 12 days.

## **Inter-Facility Transfers**

- Asymptomatic transfers to other acute care facilities (excluding LTC and CCF) do not require testing at this time, as there is no documented community transmission or reservoir in PEI hospitals.
- Testing can be provided for anyone who requires a test prior to procedure/surgery/ etc. at an out-of-province (OOP) facility.
- Inpatients returning from OOP facilities who were off-Island for  $\leq 24$  hours require routine testing at 48 hours; test again at 7 days post admission. Testing is not required if patient is no longer an inpatient.
- Inpatients returning from OOP facilities who were off-Island for  $> 24$  hours require routine testing on arrival; test again at 7 days post admission. Testing is not required if patient is no longer an inpatient.

## **Long-term Care / Community Care Service Providers**

- Weekly testing of service providers who have direct physical contact with residents (e.g., hairdressers, foot care worker, seamstress, etc.) in long-term care facilities and community care facilities.
- Weekly testing of Partners in Care is NOT required.

## **Correctional Facility Admissions**

- Test (routine testing) on admission to the facility (if had not already tested in past 48 hours) and at 7 days post admission.

## **Workers with Travel**

### **Rotational Workers (including Truck Drivers)**

#### **Requests for testing by rotational workers shall be granted.**

Rotational workers are those on a set work schedule, with  $\geq 50\%$  of their time working outside of PEI, and who are home for 21 days or less.

- PEI residents who are rotational workers arriving to PEI from within Canada – test at 0-1, 4-6, and 9-11 days (if still on the Island). Testing frequency resets with each arrival.\*
- PEI residents who are rotational workers and who are arriving in PEI multiple times each week should be tested at least once every 7 days.\*
- PEI residents who are rotational workers arriving to PEI from anywhere outside of Canada:
  - If working while in PEI – test at 0-1, 4-6, and 9-11 days (if still on the Island). Testing frequency resets with each arrival.\*
  - If working while in PEI and arriving in PEI multiple times each week – test at least once every 7 days.\*
  - If not working while in PEI – see International Arrivals below.

## **Other Workers**

- **Incoming domestic workers from NB (even if in PEI for  $< 24$  hours) – test on arrival.**
- Workers (residents and non-residents) arriving to PEI from within Canada – test at 0-1, 4-6, and 9-11 days.\*
- **Workers (residents and non-residents) arriving in PEI multiple times each week (even if in PEI for  $< 24$  hours) should be tested at least once every 7 days.**
- Workers (residents and non-residents) arriving to PEI from outside of Canada:
  - If working while in PEI – test at 0-1, 4-6, and 9-11 days;\*
  - If not working while in PEI – see International Arrivals below.

## **International Arrivals (including students)**

- Test international arrivals at 0-1 and 9-11 days.\*

## **Domestic Students – Arriving From Outside of PEI**

- Test at 0-1, 4-6, and 9-11 days.\*
- If isolating at a designated facility, test at 0-1 and 9-11 days.

## **Funerals / Custody Arrangements / Family Support or Connections/ Seasonal Residents**

- Travelers arriving to PEI to attend a funeral and/or wake, test at 0-1, 4-6, and 9-11 days (if still on the Island). Must receive a negative test prior to attending the funeral/wake.\*
- Children traveling out of province as part of a custody arrangement, upon return to PEI, test at 0-1, 4-6, and 9-11 days. Must receive a negative test prior to returning to school/daycare.\*
- Seasonal residents and travelers arriving to PEI to provide support to or to reconnect with PEI residents may be considered for testing on a case-by-case basis.\*
- Visitors arriving to PEI for the purpose of compassionate visits to be with a dying family member or for the birth of a child, test at 0-1, 4-6, and 9-11 days (if still on the Island). Must receive a negative test prior to the first visitation. For those visiting a facility, please confirm with the facility the testing and approval process, as the facility will need to be contacted by the laboratory for the negative result. Administration or nursing supervisor responsible for the inpatient initiates the test request and produces an authorized visitor letter sent to PEI Office of Public Safety. Follow instructions on where to get tested routinely with results the same day. In select situations when a test is needed sooner at the QEH, the QEH unit will use Appendix B.

\*Please note: The Testing Memo does not address all requirements for self-isolation. For the most up-to-date direction on self-isolation requirements and exemptions, please consult relevant information on the Government of PEI COVID-19 website or sector specific guidance, as appropriate.

## **Screeners at Points of Entry**

- Weekly testing for personnel screening travelers at points of entry (bridge, airport, and ferry terminals).

## **Postmortem**

- Test upon autopsy.

## **Requirement for COVID-19 Test for Entry into an International Country**

- Travelers requiring a COVID-19 test to enter another country may be tested.

Expected International Travelers need to call 1-833-533-9333 or email [COVIDtravel@gov.pe.ca](mailto:COVIDtravel@gov.pe.ca) to reach the scheduling clinic at least 5 days before travel to book an appointment approximately 28 to 42 hours before departure to allow 72 hours before arrival to receiving country. Turnaround times for testing for international travel cannot be guaranteed.

## **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.

## STAT TESTING

Routine testing for COVID-19 is offered multiple times per day with turnaround times between 6 and 24 hours upon receipt to the QEH Laboratory. Swabs must arrive to the lab within 24 hours of collection. The request for Stat testing must meet PEI guidance or be directed by the Chief Public Health Office or the Medical Microbiologist.

The following would be considered for Stat (vs routine) testing:

- ER for admitted patients at QEH, PCH, KCMH, Western Hospital that meet routine criteria.
- Patients admitted to the ICU or require critical care in the ED, including Code Blue cases where the patient is suspected of having COVID-19 or their risk factors are unknown.
- Symptomatic admissions to Labor and Delivery
- Symptomatic admissions to QEH Unit 9, Hillsborough Hospital, Provincial Addiction Treatment Facility, and Prince County Hospital Inpatient Psychiatry Unit
- Symptomatic residents of long-term care (LTC)
- Symptomatic pediatric patients admitted to hospital
- Offenders with symptoms transported by police officers
- **As needed, the first test for off-Island nursing and medical staff working in acute care facilities**
- **As needed, the first test for off-Island technical workers (vendors, service personnel) who work in acute care facilities or long-term care facilities (See Appendix B for this request)**
- Requests approved by CPHO or the microbiologist on call (see Testing Outside of Guidelines above)

QEH & PCH ER: All samples from QEH & PCH ER arriving in the lab between 8:00AM to 11:30PM will be processed STAT without the need of a phone call. The porter will directly drop off samples that will be completed typically within 2 to 3 hours. Nursing, RT, and medical staff are directed to NOT call the lab for a status update until 4 hours have passed (see critical below). After 11:30PM, Stats from QEH ER still require a page to the hematology technologist, or they will be processed at 8:00AM by Microbiology.

With the exception of the QEH & PCH ER above, all Stat microbiology requests require a phone call to the receiving laboratory or they will not be processed Stat. The technologist will ask if the test is on Stat guidelines, it is the caller's responsibility to know the guidelines. If not on guidelines, the technologist will ask if CPHO or the Medical Microbiologist has approved. When ordering the test, information provided on the requisition will assist in clarifying if the test meets guidelines or has been previously approved. Microbiologist on call will review these documents and may contact the ordering provider or service as necessary.

Stat tests are provided at QEH microbiology in dedicated windows 8 AM, 10 AM, noon, 2 PM, 4 PM, 6 PM, 8 PM, 10 PM, as well as overnight by Hematology at 1 AM, 3 AM, and 5 AM. PCH now offers the same time slots.

If there are times that testing needs to be completed even faster, i.e., "Critical", then page the microbiologist on call directly. If overnight (after 11:30 PM), then contact Hematology technologist at QEH or the overnight technologist at PCH first to see if they can accommodate. If a test has been submitted and the patients status changes to critical then follow the same process. Any calls received before 4 hours from time of collection from PCH ER or QEH ER will be redirected to the medical microbiologist or covering pathologist on call.

**For on Guidelines or CPHO/Microbiologist on call approved Stat testing call:**

Time	QEH Microbiology Testing	PCH Main Lab
8:00AM – 4:00PM	894-2312	438-4285
4:00PM – 11:30PM	2111 (ask for Microbiology tech)	438-4285
11:30PM – 8:00AM	2111 (ask for Hematology tech)	438-4285

**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.**

**The Medical Microbiologist may be reached through locating or through 902-894-2515.**

**Testing Indications Removed from Previous Memo**

- N/A

Thank you all for your cooperation and dedication to all Islanders in these challenging times.  
Please let us know if you have any questions or clarifications.

By: Dr. Heather Morrison, CPHO  
Dr. Greg German, Medical Microbiologist

**COVID-19 VIRUS REQUEST FORM (2021)**  **RAPID REQUEST**  
 **STAT REQUEST (Need Callback info)**

Provincial Microbiology Laboratory  
 Queen Elizabeth Hospital  
 Charlottetown, PEI  
 Phone (902)894-2300 Fax (902)894-2120

Address for Non-PEI Residents Required

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Street: \_\_\_\_\_  
 City: \_\_\_\_\_ Prov./State: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Postal Code/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_ Patient Phone # \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Specimen Collected</b> By: _____ Date (YYYY/MM/DD): / / Time (HH:MM):	<b>Payment Responsibility</b> <input type="checkbox"/> WCB <input type="checkbox"/> DVA <input type="checkbox"/> DND <input type="checkbox"/> RCMP <input type="checkbox"/> Self Pay Canadian <input type="checkbox"/> Self Pay Non-Canadian Provincial Medicare # exp. date:	DOB: YYYY- MMM-DD   Sex	Medical Record Number (MRN)
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**Ordering MD:** CHIEF HEALTH OFFICER ( CHO ) **Alternative ordering MD/NP:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Location of Collection:**  
 Charlottetown  Borden  Montague  Island EMS  
 Summerside  O'Leary  Other Site:

<b>Specimen type:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> NP swab <input type="checkbox"/> Nasal/Throat swab <input type="checkbox"/> NP (POCT-Confirmation) <input type="checkbox"/> Nasal <input type="checkbox"/> Midturbinate <input type="checkbox"/> Saline Gargle <input type="checkbox"/> Midturbinate/throat <input type="checkbox"/> Water Gargle	<b>Traveler History:</b> Where: _____ When: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Arriving from International [98] <input type="checkbox"/> Arriving from out of Province [99] <input type="checkbox"/> Departing for International travel [23] -->Passport Number (if required):
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<b>MANDATORY Clinical Information:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Symptomatic write "S" on tube</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Not Symptomatic write "A" on tube</b>	<b>Exposure History:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Outbreak OB _____ & write on tube <input type="checkbox"/> Close Contact (but no OB code)[16] <input type="checkbox"/> Casual Contact (Not self isolating) [90]
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<input type="checkbox"/> Long term care resident [06] <input type="checkbox"/> Community care resident [07] <input type="checkbox"/> Palliative care resident [09] <input type="checkbox"/> Group home <b>or shelter</b> resident [08] <input type="checkbox"/> Mental Health and Addictions [10] <input type="checkbox"/> Correctional facility admission [14] <input type="checkbox"/> Other facility:	<input type="checkbox"/> Health care provider (HCP)/family member [11] <input type="checkbox"/> Essential worker ( EW)/family member [12] --> Role of HCP/EW: Location: <input type="checkbox"/> Temporary Foreign Workers [13] <input type="checkbox"/> Screener at point of entry [15] <input type="checkbox"/> K-12 Teacher / Staff [25] <input type="checkbox"/> K-12 Student [26] <input type="checkbox"/> UPEI Student [27]
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Special request of the CPHO or staff [19], Explain:  
 Previous Positive Case [29], Date Positive:

None of the Above [17]

**Symptoms (check off any applicable symptoms below):**

<input type="checkbox"/> Fever * _____ °C	<input type="checkbox"/> Runny nose	<input type="checkbox"/> Cough/ Worsening Cough
<input type="checkbox"/> Chills	<input type="checkbox"/> Headache	<input type="checkbox"/> Shortness of Breath
<input type="checkbox"/> Sore Throat	<input type="checkbox"/> Marked Fatigue	<input type="checkbox"/> Loss of taste/smell
<input type="checkbox"/> Other symptoms (list):	* Fever in Seniors are broadly defined	

Assessment Performed by (signature) :

Testing Site: Cough & Fever Clinic: Yes  No   
 First Swab:  Repeat Swab:

QUEEN ELIZABETH HOSPITAL



PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND  
A division of Health PEI

**Location of Testing:**

Emergency Department  
Queen Elizabeth Hospital  
Charlottetown, PEI

**Hours of Operation:**

Sunday – Saturday 24/7

## COVID-19 INFORMATION REQUEST:

## CHECK ONE:

EXCEPTIONAL ONE TIME REQUESTS	HEALTH CARE WORKER REQUESTS	Vendor or Service Representative
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Terminal Palliative Care Patient Visit</b> Unit: Phone: Patient to be visited: Initiating Staff:	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Locum / Returning Physician or Staff</b> Requestor for service: _____ Cell/Page number: Location of locum/work:	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Department / Unit requiring service</b> Contact:
<b>Testing in all cases assumes the patient does not have any COVID-19 Symptoms. If Symptoms develop further testing is required</b>		

**Date Form filled out:**

Date arrived or expected to arrive on PEI: (MMM/DD/YYYY):

Time:

**CHECK ONE OF THE FOLLOWING:**

**1. PEI RESIDENT:**  **2. NON-PEI BUT CANADIAN RESIDENT**  **3. NON-Canadian Resident**

Full Legal Name:

DOB (MMM/DD/YYYY): \_\_\_\_\_

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

Permanent Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number (Cell): \_\_\_\_\_

Address staying on PEI: \_\_\_\_\_

Emergency Contact and Cell phone: \_\_\_\_\_

For 1 and 2: Province and Health Card Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Exp Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Email form to [QEHADmitting@ihis.org](mailto:QEHADmitting@ihis.org) by the Health PEI Requestor

Call results to

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

**NOTE:**

- 1. For Name, please include first and last name and Title (RN, MD, etc)**
- 2. Phone number needs to a direct line (No Voice Mail)**
- 3. LAB Technologist cannot call the person or family member directly. If unsure of whom to put for call results then write "Nurse Supervisor on Call."**