

Safer Schools - Learning Through COVID-19

Your child is sick. Now what?

Children develop symptoms for many different reasons. Some children have underlying medical issues that present symptoms (i.e. seasonal allergies, asthma, etc.). The overlap between COVID-19 symptoms and other common illnesses like colds and flu means that many people with symptoms of COVID-19 may actually be ill with something else.

If your child develops symptoms at home or is sent home from school due to symptoms, take the following steps.

STEP 1: Seek immediate care for severe illness

If your child is in distress (i.e. significant trouble breathing, chest pain, fainting, or have a significant worsening of any chronic disease symptoms), do not go to a testing centre. Call 9-1-1 or go to the nearest Emergency Department. Be sure to follow up with your primary care provider.

STEP 2: Check if symptoms are possibly due to COVID-19

Common COVID-19 symptoms include:

- Fever (temperature of 37.8°C or greater)
- New or worsening cough
- Shortness of breath
- Sore throat
- Difficulty swallowing
- Loss of taste or smell
- Nausea/vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal pain
- Runny nose, or nasal congestion – not related to underlying conditions such as seasonal allergies, post nasal drip, etc.

Other symptoms sometimes seen in children can include:

- Unexplained tiredness
- Delirium (acutely altered mental status and inattention)
- Chills
- Headaches
- Croup
- Conjunctivitis (Pink eye)

Use the on-line Ontario COVID-19 self-assessment tool covid-19.ontario.ca/self-assessment. You will get a recommendation on what to do next.

If the symptoms are due to common allergies or another underlying condition, consider contacting your health care provider for possible documentation to support the discussion with your school.

STEP 3: Decide if you will get your child tested for COVID-19

If your child has COVID-19 symptoms that are not due to underlying conditions, **call Lambton Public Health at 519-383-8331 to book an appointment** at a dedicated School COVID-19 Testing Centre.

If you choose not to get your child tested and they have COVID-19 symptoms, monitor the symptoms and your child must **self-isolate for 14 days**. Your child can return to school following that time period if they are feeling generally well and have no remaining symptoms.

STEP 4: Monitor symptoms and self-isolate while waiting for results

While waiting for test results your child must be isolated:

- Stay home – do not leave your home or attend school, social events or any other public gatherings.
- Avoid close contact between the child and others in your household if possible
- Your child can attend school virtually, if feeling well enough to participate and the option is available.
- Other members of the household do not need to self-isolate unless showing symptoms or advised to do so by a health-care provider.

STEP 5: Check results and complete isolation as directed

covid-19.ontario.ca - visit the provincial website to access results. Test results are typically available in 2-3 days, but may take longer if testing volumes are high. If you are unable to access this website or do not have a health card number please call Lambton Public Health.

If your child tests positive for COVID-19:

- Lambton Public Health will call you and provide information about the length of isolation required and further direction on returning to school.
- **All household members and close contacts** of a person who tests positive for COVID-19 will be contacted by Lambton Public Health and required to stay home and self-isolate for a minimum of 14 days.
- Your child can attend school virtually, if feeling well enough to participate and the option is available.

If your child is negative for COVID-19:

- They can return to school when symptom-free for at least 24 hours (48 hours for gastrointestinal symptoms).

If your child is ill due to another reason diagnosed by a health care provider and does not have COVID-19:

- They can return to school when symptom-free for at least 24 hours (48 hours for gastrointestinal symptoms) or as directed by the health care provider.

Additional tips for caring for your child during isolation

- Try to have one person only care for the sick child so others are not exposed.
- If your child can wear a face mask or cloth face covering without finding it hard to breathe, have them wear one when the caregiver is in the room. Don't leave your child alone while they're wearing a mask or cloth face covering. The caregiver also should wear one when in the same room.
- If possible, have your sick child use a different bathroom from others. If that isn't possible, clean the bathroom often, especially after use by the ill child.
- Everyone in your family should wash their hands frequently. Wash with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, or use alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Use regular household cleaners or wipes to clean things that get touched a lot (doorknobs, light switches, toys, remote controls, phones, etc.). Do this every day.

Resources

Lambton Public Health website:

<https://lambtonpublichealth.ca/2019-novel-coronavirus/>

Information on:

- [How to protect yourself from COVID-19](#)
- [Self-isolation](#)
- [Families and Caregivers - Education guidance and FAQs](#)

Video: Explaining a COVID-19 Test to Children - BC Children's Hospital

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AhC6_JXagxE&feature=youtu.be

References

- <http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19/childcare-schools>
- <https://kidshealth.org/ETCH/en/parents/coronavirus-child-is-sick.html>