

# What to Expect if You Have Been Placed in Isolation at UHN due to Suspected or Confirmed COVID-19

## Information for patients and families

### Why was I tested for COVID-19?

You were tested for COVID-19 because you had symptoms of COVID-19.

### Why was I placed in isolation?

- The hospital uses special steps called additional precautions (isolation) to prevent spreading infections (germs) to patients, visitors and staff. We use different types of precautions depending on how germs spread.
- You have been placed on additional precautions because we suspect or have confirmed you have an infection that is contagious.

## **What types of precautions are being used for COVID-19? What can I expect?**

The Ministry of Health has advised hospitals to follow Droplet and Contact precautions to protect your health care team and other patients.

You may be placed in a room by yourself. All of your care will be provided inside your room. Signs will be placed outside of your room to explain the steps everyone must follow before entering.

Everyone entering your room must follow all of these steps.

- Wash hands with alcohol-based hand sanitizer
- Put on a yellow gown
- Put on a surgical/fluid-resistant mask
  - For some procedures, health care providers might wear a specially-fitted N95 respirator mask.
- Put on protective eyewear (goggles)
- Put on gloves

All these items can be found on the isolation cart outside your room.

## **Can I have visitors?**

Most patients at UHN who have a positive or suspected case of COVID-19 may not have visitors at this time. This is to help stop the spread of the virus in the hospital and to keep you, other patients and our staff safe.

- If you would like to have an Essential Care Partner support you during your hospital stay, please discuss your situation with the unit manager. They will speak with your doctor and a staff member from the Infection Prevention and Control (IPAC) team to discuss if it is safe to do so. Often, hospital staff and the health care team are able to provide appropriate support in these situations as well.
- If you are eligible, you may choose 1 Essential Care Partner. An Essential Care Partner is a support person whose presence has been deemed essential to the safety and well-being of a patient while they are inside the hospital. You may also choose a second Essential Care Partner to visit in case your main support person is not available.
- Essential Care Partners will **not** be allowed to enter if they:
  - have any symptoms of COVID-19
  - have travelled outside of Canada within the last 14 days
  - had close contact within the last 14 days with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 or is suspected of having COVID-19
- If you had recent contact with your Essential Care Partner at home or in the hospital, they will not be able to enter the hospital for **14 days** from **the last day they had contact with you**. This is to limit the spread of COVID-19 in the hospital.

Other caregivers, visitors, drivers and members of the public are not allowed in the hospital. For more information, please see [Limits on Who Can Enter UHN During the COVID-19 Pandemic](https://www.uhn.ca/PatientsFamilies/Health_Information/Health_Topics/Documents/Limits_On_Who_Can_Enter_UHN_During_COVID19.pdf) ([https://www.uhn.ca/PatientsFamilies/Health\\_Information/Health\\_Topics/Documents/Limits\\_On\\_Who\\_Can\\_Enter\\_UHN\\_During\\_COVID19.pdf](https://www.uhn.ca/PatientsFamilies/Health_Information/Health_Topics/Documents/Limits_On_Who_Can_Enter_UHN_During_COVID19.pdf)).

Some exceptions may be made in special situations, with the approval of the unit manager and IPAC.

## **What is considered close contact?**

Close contact is when you have been in close physical contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 or has symptoms of COVID-19 within the last 14 days. This includes living in the same home or being less than 2 metres or 6 feet away from someone for more than 15 minutes.

## **What does my Essential Care Partner need to do before they come to the hospital?**

Essential Care Partners must:

- self-screen for symptoms of COVID-19 before coming to the hospital and stay home if they aren't feeling well.
- clean their hands and speak with entrance screening staff when they arrive at the hospital.

If they pass screening, all Essential Care Partners must:

- wear a mask the entire time they are in the hospital. One will be provided at the entrance.
- sign-in at the unit nursing station when they arrive on the unit.
- be screened by your health care team for respiratory illness before entering your room.
- be trained on how to put on and take off the personal protective equipment they are required to wear when entering your room.
- follow all of the listed precautions on the signs posted outside your room each time they enter and leave.

Visitor policies and entrance screening processes may change frequently. For the most up to date information, please visit [UHN's COVID-19 webpage](https://www.uhn.ca/covid19) (<https://www.uhn.ca/covid19>).

## **Am I allowed to leave my room if I am on precautions?**

We will provide all of your care in your room.

You may only leave the room if staff from the Infection Prevention and Control (IPAC) team say it is safe to do so.

- Before leaving the room, you must wash your hands and wear a clean gown or clothing.
- You must wear a mask when leaving your room for any reason. Ask your health care team for one.

## **What can I do to prevent the spread of COVID-19 while in isolation?**

- Wash your hands regularly with soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizer. This is especially important after you cough or sneeze.
- Follow good respiratory etiquette. This includes covering your mouth and nose with a disposable tissue or your sleeve when coughing or sneezing.
- Keep your door closed and do not leave your room.
- Wear a mask when interacting with your health care team or visiting with your Essential Care Partner. Ask your health care team for one.

## **How long will I be on special precautions?**

This is different for each person. The Infection Prevention and Control (IPAC) team assesses all patients on precautions and talks with your health care team every day. You will be on precautions until you meet the hospital's criteria for coming off of precautions.

## How long will I be in the hospital?

We may not be able to give you an exact amount of time that you may be in hospital. How long you stay in the hospital depends on your symptoms and any other health conditions you may have.

Your health care team will let you know when you are safe to return home.

- If your symptoms are less severe and you do not require a high level of care provided in a hospital setting, you may be sent home to self-isolate while you wait for your test results or to recover.
  - We will give you instructions on how to keep yourself and the people you live with safe from your illness.
  - Toronto Public Health may follow up with you to monitor your recovery.
  - Wear a mask when you leave the hospital.

**Remember:** washing your hands is one of the best things you can do to stop the spread of germs.

## What if my test for COVID-19 is negative?

If your test is negative, your care team will review your health and decide the safest next steps for you.

## Who can I talk to if I have questions?

If you have questions or concerns about COVID-19 while you are at UHN:

- speak to your health care team
- email [UHN's Infection Prevention and Control](mailto:InfectionControlUHN@uhn.ca) (InfectionControlUHN@uhn.ca)

## Where can I get more information?

The information about COVID-19 is being updated regularly and new details are being released.

It is important to get your information from reliable sources. If you have questions about COVID-19 or other health concerns, you can call the following agencies or visit their websites.

### University Health Network

[UHN COVID-19 website](https://www.uhn.ca/covid19) (<https://www.uhn.ca/covid19>)

### Government of Ontario

Telehealth: 1 866 797 0000

[Government of Ontario COVID-19 website](https://covid-19.ontario.ca) (<https://covid-19.ontario.ca>)

### Toronto Public Health

Helpline: 416 338 7600

[Toronto Public Health website](https://www.toronto.ca/health) (<https://www.toronto.ca/health>)

### Public Health Ontario

[Public Health Ontario website](https://www.publichealthontario.ca) (<https://www.publichealthontario.ca>)

### Public Health Agency of Canada

[Public Health Agency of Canada website](https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health.html)  
(<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health.html>)