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 the novel coronavirus (COVID-19)?
You were tested for COVID-19 because you had symptoms of a respiratory illness.

Why was I admitted to the hospital and placed in isolation?
- You were admitted to hospital because you have symptoms that require a higher level of care or careful monitoring.
- We use special steps that we call additional precautions (isolation) in the hospital 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 special precautions because we suspect, or have confirmed, that you have a respiratory 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 staff, visitors and other patients.
You will 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 explaining what steps anyone entering must take.

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?**

Starting on March 21, hospitals across Ontario made the difficult decision to put a “No Visitors” policy in place. This to try to slow down the spread of COVID-19, and to protect our patients, healthcare staff, and members of the community.

The unit manager may approve visitors (in advance) for a patient in a special situation such as:

- Patients who are receiving end-of-life care or are critically ill. We may ask visitors to visit only 1 time each day.
- Patients who have just had urgent surgery or are frail and need an escort/family member for their safety.

All approved visitors must pass the screening criteria before they are allowed in the hospital. This means they cannot have any symptoms: fever, cough, runny nose, sore throat, or shortness of breath, and they cannot have travelled outside of Canada in the last 14 days.

They will also need to:

- Self-screen for symptoms of illness before coming to the hospital, and stay
home if they aren’t feeling well. As mentioned, they will also be carefully screened at the hospital entrance. Sign-in at the unit nursing station when they arrive.

- Be screened again by the health care team for respiratory illness before entering your room.
- Be trained on how to put on and take off the personal protective equipment (PPE) listed above.
- Follow all of the listed precautions on the signs posted outside your room each time they enter and leave.

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 a staff member 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 fresh clean gown or clothing.
- You may be asked to wear a mask.

What can I do to help 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.
- Remind any visitors to follow the necessary precautions when they visit with you.
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. Your length of stay will depend on your symptoms, along with 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.

If this happens, you will be given instructions about how to keep yourself and other people in your household and community safe from your illness.

Toronto Public Health may follow up with you to monitor your recovery.

You may need to 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 comes back negative?
If your test is negative for COVID-19, meaning that you do not have the infection, 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, please:

- Speak to your health care team
- Email 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
   Website: www.uhn.ca/covid19

Government of Ontario
   Telehealth: 1 866 797 0000
   Website: www.ontario.ca/page/2019-novel-coronavirus

Toronto Public Health
   Helpline: 416 338 7600
   Website: www.toronto.ca/health

Public Health Ontario
   Website: www.publichealthontario.ca

Public Health Agency of Canada
   Website: www.canada.ca/en/public-health.html

Health Canada
   Website: www.canada.ca/en/health-canada.html