

Recommendations on lifting isolation measures for healthcare workers



COMITÉ SUR LES INFECTIONS NOSOCOMIALES DU QUÉBEC

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Category	All healthcare workers	“Critical” healthcare workers, i.e., those required to avoid service disruption
1) Confirmed COVID-19 case (symptomatic or asymptomatic ¹)	<p>Self-isolation for 14 days² after onset of symptoms and:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No fever for 48 hours (without the use of fever reducers) No acute symptoms for 24 hours (excluding residual cough or loss of smell) Two consecutive negative PCRs from respiratory specimens at ≥ 24-hour intervals.³ If the test comes back positive, wait at least 48 to 72 hours before repeating it. Assign worker to COVID-19 cases upon their return when possible 	
2) Travellers	<p>Asymptomatic</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Self-isolation for 14 days after returning home (Quarantine Act) <p>Symptomatic: COVID-19 test⁴</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Positive = Follow recommendations for confirmed case Negative = Self-isolation for 14 days after returning home (Quarantine Act) 	
3) Contact with a confirmed case ⁵ in a healthcare setting AND ⁶ based on the level of exposure ⁶	<p>Asymptomatic (high-risk⁶)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Self-isolation for 14 days after exposure <p>Symptomatic: COVID-19 test⁴</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Positive = Follow recommendations for confirmed case Negative = Continue self-isolating for 14 days after exposure 	<p>Asymptomatic (high-risk⁶)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Isolation for 7 days after last exposure, then return to work in compliance with required measures.⁷ In the event of a severe service disruption, an early return to work is possible in compliance with required measures⁷ <p>Symptomatic: COVID-19 test⁴</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Positive = Follow recommendations for confirmed case Negative = Isolation for 7 days after last exposure, then if no symptoms,⁸ return to work in compliance with required measures⁷. If there is an imminent risk of service disruption and if symptoms resolve⁸ before the end of the 7-day isolation period, return to work in compliance with required measures⁷

Category	All healthcare workers	“Critical” healthcare workers, i.e., those required to avoid service disruption
<p>4) Home contact with a confirmed case⁹</p>	<p>Asymptomatic</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Self-isolation for 14 days after last exposure <p>Symptomatic: COVID-19 test⁴</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Positive = Follow recommendations for confirmed case Negative = Continue self-isolating for 14 days after last exposure 	<p>Asymptomatic</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Isolation for 7 days after last exposure, then return to work in compliance with required measures.⁷ <p>Symptomatic: COVID-19 test⁴</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Positive = Follow recommendations for confirmed case Negative = Isolation for 7 days after last exposure, then if no symptoms,⁸ return to work in compliance with required measures⁷
<p>5) Other types of contact</p>	<p>Asymptomatic</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contact with an asymptomatic contact case: Can return to work without taking additional measures other than those in effect in the workplace Contact with an asymptomatic traveller: Can return to work without taking additional measures other than those in effect in the workplace Contact with someone under investigation (results pending): Can return to work without taking additional measures other than those in effect in the workplace 	
<p>6) No identified exposure and community transmission</p>	<p>Asymptomatic: No measures</p> <p>Symptomatic: COVID-19 test⁴ (self-isolation pending results)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Positive = Follow recommendations for confirmed case Negative = When calling to provide test results, check for symptoms: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If symptoms improve: Return to work but wear a mask as long as symptoms persist (respiratory etiquette) If symptoms worsen, repeat the test 48 to 72 hours after the last test and continue self-isolating pending results 	
<p>7) Travel of a locum or contract healthcare worker in a region covered by the order</p>	<p>Limit the number of travelling healthcare workers (unless this causes a service disruption)</p>	<p>Adjust according to the healthcare worker’s level of exposure, the epidemiology of the home region, and local or regional decisions</p> <p>Asymptomatic</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Return to work but in compliance with strict measures¹⁰ Maintain physical and social distancing Return to where they are staying right after a shift and avoid going out <p>Symptomatic</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow the instructions according to the contact category (1 to 6)

Explanatory notes

1. If an asymptomatic case develops symptoms after the positive test, the 14-day period starts from the onset of symptoms. Follow-up and evaluation must be performed according to local procedures (e.g., health department).
2. Immunocompromised healthcare workers must self-isolate for 21 days and if they go back to work, they should not be assigned to COVID-19 cases even if they are considered recovered. See: [COVID-19 : Recommandations intérimaires pour la protection des travailleurs immunosupprimés](#) (in French).
3. Healthcare workers can stop self-isolating after 14 days, like everyone else. However, two negative tests are required for them to return to work.
4. The COVID-19 test must be performed at least 48 hours after the onset of symptoms.
5. See: [Définition de cas de COVID-19 – Québec](#) (in French).
6. See: [COVID-19 : Évaluation du niveau de risque d'exposition des travailleurs de la santé lors de soins à un cas confirmé](#) (in French).
7. Measures: Wear a medical mask, practise strict hand hygiene, self-monitor for symptoms and take temperature twice a day, practise physical distancing (e.g., during breaks and meals) until 14 days after the last exposure.
8. No symptoms = 48 hours without fever (without the use of fever reducers) and 24 hours without acute symptoms (except residual cough or loss of smell).
9. See: [Définition de cas de COVID-19 – Québec](#) (in French) and [COVID-19 : Mesures pour la gestion des cas et des contacts dans la communauté](#) (in French).
10. Measures: Wear a medical mask, practise strict hand hygiene, self-monitor for symptoms and take temperature twice a day, practise physical distancing (e.g., during breaks and meal times) until 14 days after departure from the home region.

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