

WDGPH COVID-19 Questions from the field: Q&A for Long-Term Care and Retirement Homes

October 28, 2020

When should staff of Long-Term Care and Retirement Homes who were previously confirmed infected and cleared of COVID-19 participate in staff surveillance testing again?

As per Ministry of Health testing and case management guidance, confirmed cases should generally not be re-tested unless clinically indicated, as positive results after clearance are not uncommon.

At this time, Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health recommends that staff who were previously confirmed infected and cleared of COVID-19 be excluded indefinitely from staff surveillance testing. Staff should only be re-tested if clinically indicated (e.g., onset of new symptoms occurs). The decision to test should be based on clinical judgment and be at the discretion of public health.

Do visitors of Long-Term Care Homes who were previously confirmed infected and cleared of COVID-19 still need to attest to testing negative for COVID-19 within the previous two weeks?

A visitor that has previously tested positive for COVID-19 may only resume visits once they have been cleared by Public Health.

As per Ministry of Health testing and case management guidance, confirmed cases should generally not be re-tested unless clinically indicated, as positive results after clearance are not uncommon. Therefore, at this time, Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health recommends that visitors who were previously confirmed infected and cleared of COVID-19 do not need to attest to testing negative for COVID-19 within the previous two weeks. However, if a visitor who has previously tested positive develops new symptoms, they should NOT be permitted to visit, and should contact their doctor or health care provider for advice, including if a COVID-19 test is recommended.

References

Ministry of Health. COVID-19 Provincial Testing Guidance Update. Version 8, 24 September 2020. Available from:

http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/publichealth/coronavirus/docs/2019_testing_guidance.pdf

Ministry of Health. COVID-19 Quick Reference Public Health Guidance on Testing and Clearance. Version 10, 1 October, 2020. Available from:

http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/publichealth/coronavirus/docs/2019_testing_clearing_cases_guidance.pdf