

Who should get tested for COVID-19?

COVID-19 causes a range of symptoms that vary from person to person. Some people may experience mild or no physical symptoms. Symptoms can take up to 10 days after exposure to COVID-19 to appear.

Omicron surge guidance

Due to the widespread transmission of COVID-19 in Yukon, we are not able to test everyone who has symptoms and we are not able to call everyone who tests positive.

We are prioritizing testing for people who are most at risk for getting very sick from COVID-19 and those who work or live in settings where there are vulnerable people (e.g., long-term care). We are doing this to protect our most vulnerable. For a majority of people, the Omicron variant is causing mild symptoms and can safely be managed at home.

You should get tested if you fall into any of the following categories and have symptoms of COVID-19:

- 12 years or older who are unvaccinated or partially vaccinated (have not received 2 doses of mRNA vaccine greater than 2 weeks prior to exposure)
- Resident or staff of a congregate setting:
 - i. Long-term care and residential care homes
 - ii. Correctional centers
 - iii. Shelters and transition homes
 - iv. Mines
- Patients in acute care settings
- Front line Health Care workers with direct patient care (eg., family physicians, nurses, dentists) and first responders
- 50 years and over
- In communities outside of Whitehorse¹
- Pregnant
- One or more risk factors for severe disease:
 - i. Obesity (BMI >30 kg/m²)
 - ii. Type 1 or 2 diabetes mellitus
 - iii. Chronic respiratory disease
 - iv. Chronic kidney disease
 - v. Cardiovascular/cerebrovascular disease
 - vi. Immunocompromised or receiving immunosuppressive therapy
 - vii. Intellectual or developmental disabilities

¹In rural communities where there is widespread community transmission there may not be resources to test all residents. In those situations we will test those in the high-risk categories above.

If you have symptoms and do not meet the high-risk criteria, we ask that you follow the recommendations below. We know this is a change in how we are managing COVID-19 in the Yukon, and that it can be difficult for you to not have a definitive answer, however we need to prioritize our resources for those who most need them. We ask that if your symptoms are mild and managed at home that you do not go to the hospital or health centre to get tested. See below on when to seek medical care.

Recommendations based on symptoms

If you have **ONE** or more of the following four symptoms, then it is highly likely you have COVID-19. You and your household members must self-isolate – please visit <https://yukon.ca/en/information-about-novel-coronavirus-self-isolating-home> for next steps:

- Fever > 37.8° C and/or chills
- Cough – new or worsening
- Trouble breathing
- Decrease or loss of smell or taste

If you have **TWO** or more of the following five List B symptoms, then it is highly likely you have COVID-19. You and your household members must self-isolate – please visit <https://yukon.ca/en/information-about-novel-coronavirus-self-isolating-home> for next steps:

- Runny nose or nasal congestion
- Headache
- Very tired
- Sore throat
- Muscle aches or joint pain

Other less common symptoms include the following. If you have any of these (and do not have any of the symptoms in the above two lists) then it is less likely you have COVID-19.

- Nausea, vomiting and/or diarrhea (age <18 only)
- Abdominal pain that does not go away
- Headache (new and unexplained)
- Pink eye
- Lack of appetite (young children)

If you **ONLY** have one or more of the five symptoms above, you should self-isolate (stay home) until your symptoms are improving for at least 24 hours. If you have nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, or abdominal pain you must wait 48 hours once your symptoms are improving before ending self-isolation.

Rarely, children can get an inflammatory condition called vasculitis that impacts the blood vessels. It can present with prolonged fever, abdominal pain, red eyes, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, and rash. It needs medical attention.

For people over the age of 60 and those with weakened immunity or underlying health conditions, there is a higher risk for severe illness – especially for those who are not vaccinated.

How long should you self-isolate if you likely have COVID-19?

The length of time you should self-isolate depends on whether or not you are fully vaccinated. Fully vaccinated is defined as:

- Two COVID-19 mRNA vaccines provided >2 weeks and <6 months before the start of your symptoms;
or
- 2 doses mRNA vaccine + booster/3rd dose > 2 weeks before the start of your symptoms.

There is evidence that those fully vaccinated are infectious (communicable) for a shorter period of time.

- People who are fully vaccinated with no high-risk health conditions can stop isolating 7 days after the start of their symptoms, if your symptoms have been improving for 24 hours (48 hours if you have gastrointestinal symptoms).
- People who are NOT fully vaccinated with no high-risk health conditions can stop isolating 10 days after the start of their symptoms, if your symptoms have been improving for 24 hours (48 hours if you have gastrointestinal symptoms).

Worried about an exposure

If you think you may have been exposed to COVID-19, you should self-monitor for symptoms every day for 10 days from the date of the exposure. If you live with someone who likely has COVID-19, you must self-isolate while they are isolating. If you don't live with them, but had close contact follow the guidance on [what to do if you're told you're a close contact](#).

When to seek medical attention

If you or your dependants have or develop any of the following symptoms, call 911 and seek immediate emergency help:

- severe difficulty breathing (for example, struggling for each breath or speaking in single words);
- severe chest pain;
- feelings of confusion; or
- loss of consciousness (fainting).

If you're concerned about your or your dependant's symptoms and they are not listed above, or if you need medical advice, call 811 or your primary health care provider for guidance on your next steps.

What to do if you have tested positive on a rapid antigen (home) test?

Some people have access to COVID-19 rapid antigen tests. If you have symptoms you should assume you have COVID-19 and follow the recommendations for isolation above. If you have tested positive and don't have symptoms, you should isolate for 7 days after the test is positive. You do not need to get a PCR (confirmatory) test unless you meet the high-risk criteria above.

We recommend that you follow the online guidance on [what to do if you get a positive COVID-19 test result](#) including [telling your close contacts](#) that you have tested positive. Your contacts should follow the instructions on [what to do if you're told you're a close contact](#).

What to do if you have tested negative on a rapid antigen (home) test?

If you have tested negative but have symptoms, follow the recommendations above for isolation.