



DURHAM REGION
HEALTH
DEPARTMENT

Fall / Winter 2022

Wee Care

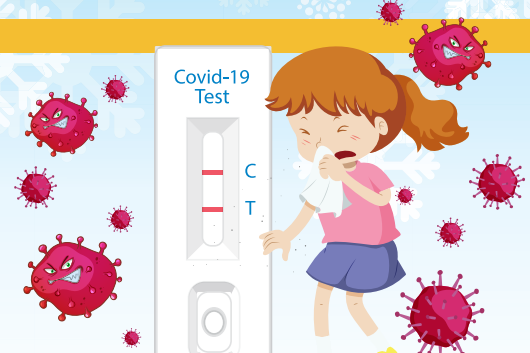
Newsletter



Updated COVID guidance

On August 31, 2022, the provincial government announced updates to the COVID Case and Contact Management guidance and the School and Child Care Screening Tool.

See the chart below for changes:



Population	Original Guidance	Guidance Change	Additional Precautions
Staff/children with COVID-19 symptoms or tested positive for COVID-19	Minimum 5 days of isolation.	Stay home (self-isolate) and do not attend school/child care until fever has resolved and other symptoms have been improving for at least 24 hours (48 hours for nausea, vomiting, and/or diarrhea).	For 10 days after your symptoms started: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wear a well-fitted mask in all public settings (including school and child care). Avoid non-essential activities where you need to take off your mask (i.e., playing a wind instrument in music class, removing your mask for sports, dining out). Temporary removal of a mask is permitted for essential activities like eating (maintain as much distancing from others as possible). Avoid visiting those who are immunocompromised or may be at higher risk of illness (i.e., seniors). Avoid non-essential visits to high risk settings (i.e., hospitals, long-term care homes).
Staff/children who test positive, but are asymptomatic	Minimum 5 days of isolation.	No longer require isolation if remain asymptomatic.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wear a mask and avoid vulnerable individuals and settings for 10 days after testing positive. Isolate immediately if symptoms develop.
Siblings/other household contacts	10 days of isolation for household contacts not fully vaccinated/boosted.	No longer require isolation regardless of vaccination status.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wear a mask for 10 days from *last exposure and avoid non-essential visits to vulnerable individuals and settings. Self-monitor for symptoms. Isolate immediately if symptoms develop.

***Last exposure:** the last day the sibling/other household contact was exposed to an individual with COVID-19 symptoms or a positive test result. For those individuals who have ongoing exposure to a case (i.e., case is unable to effectively self-isolate), their last exposure is the date the case's self-isolation ends. For example, if a parent is caring for a child with COVID-19 and the child became symptomatic on Monday and symptoms improve/resolve within 24 hours, the parent's last exposure is Tuesday.

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Updated COVID guidance (cont'd)

To aid you when confronted with illness in your centre, please refer to your Wee Care manual, child care website, Durham COVID info hub, and the following resources:

- For the most current screening tools, please see [here](#).
- For the most current COVID-19 guidance, please see [here](#).
- For information about COVID-19 in Durham, please see Durham.ca/covidinfohub.
- For information about operating a child care and outbreak management, please see [here](#).

This situation is fluid and is being re-evaluated on a continual basis. As more information and guidance becomes available, this guidance may change and will be communicated to you.

If you have questions, please email EHL@durham.ca or call our Durham Health Coonnection Line (DHCL) at 905-668-2020 or 1-800-841-2729.

COVID-19 Case and Contact Information Hub

Home / Health and Wellness / COVID-19 Update / COVID-19 Case and Contact Information Hub

Please select one of the options below to get COVID-19 isolation and testing information that is relevant to you.

- I need COVID-19 vaccine information
- I have symptoms or a positive test result
- What are the COVID-19 symptoms
- I am a contact of a COVID-19 case
- COVID-19 in the workplace
- Schools and child care centres
- Multilingual COVID-19 resources
- Other COVID-19 questions

Look out for ticks until snowfall

Ticks are very resilient and they will be out searching for a blood meal until late fall/early winter when there is lasting snow cover on the ground. Ticks like to bury themselves in leaf litter for warmth and insulation, and female ticks will lay their eggs under the leaves so that the eggs can withstand the Winter cold and hatch out in the Spring.

Remember to keep checking children and staff for ticks when they come in from outside activities - especially if they've been out in a wooded, brushy area or have been playing in the leaves.

Blacklegged ticks ("deer ticks") are common in Durham Region and some blacklegged ticks may carry the bacteria that causes Lyme disease.

If you find a tick on a child or a staff, you can identify it by using the [eTick](#) website. You just need to take a clear, digital photograph of the tick and submit it.

If a tick is found attached and feeding on anyone, the tick should be carefully removed as soon as possible. Fine-tipped tweezers can be used to grip the tick as close to the person's skin surface as possible and to slowly pull straight up. Caution is required to try to ensure that the tick's mouth parts are removed intact.

If a tick has possibly been attached and feeding for more than 24 hours, and/or if an individual has any of the common, early symptoms of Lyme disease after spending time in a wooded or brushy area, or any areas known to be at higher risk for Lyme disease, the affected individual should be advised to consult their health care provider (HCP) immediately. If the individual still has the tick, they should take it with them, in a tightly-closed container, to assist the HCP with their clinical diagnosis and to help determine whether the individual may require Lyme disease treatment or testing.

Common early symptoms of Lyme disease can include:

- A red, expanding rash that may look like a "bull's eye" target. The rash occurs in roughly 70 per cent of individuals infected with the bacteria that causes Lyme disease
- Fever
- Feeling of discomfort
- Headache
- Joint and muscle pain
- Neck weakness or stiffness
- Fatigue – often extreme
- Eye irritation
- Behavioural changes
- Sleep trouble

Without treatment, the rash and other early symptoms will disappear over time. However, the symptoms should never be ignored as without treatment, the bacterial infection will remain, spread throughout the body, and eventually lead to more serious, longer-lasting symptoms, possibly affecting the joints, heart and/or nervous systems.

For further information about ticks and Lyme disease check out the following websites:

Durham Region: durham.ca/en/health-and-wellness/lyme-disease.aspx

Public Health Ontario: publichealthontario.ca/en/diseases-and-conditions/infectious-diseases/vector-borne-zoonotic-diseases/lyme-disease



The pandemic and early child development

The COVID-19 pandemic has had many impacts on early childhood development. Two key areas greatly impacted are social and emotional development. The development of skills in these areas is fundamental as they lay the foundation for school readiness and life-long health and learning.

For children struggling in some of these areas, you may notice a decrease in these behaviours:

- getting along with others
- responsibility & respect
- independence
- readiness to explore new things
- “helping” behaviour

You may have noticed an increase in these behaviours:

- anxious or aggressive behaviour
- hyperactivity or inattentive behaviour

You can help! Preschool settings, like childcare centres are a fantastic place to support a child’s development of social and emotional skills through many fun activities. Here are some you can try:

Social development

- Include activities where children work in small groups to complete a common goal (e.g., working together to create a zoo out of building blocks).
- Children learn to take turns and practice patience during group play, and they see firsthand that co-operation can help them to achieve a goal.
- Working in a team also teaches children to handle conflict in a group setting.

Emotional development

- Helping children name emotions and recognize them in others helps them to build empathy and develop self-regulation.
- Pretend play helps children to imagine future situations together and practice solving difficult and stressful problems in a safe setting. This can reduce stress levels and negative feelings when children encounter these situations in real life.
- Remember, you are great role models. The way you show empathy and caring behaviours will help children to learn these skills themselves.

For more information on child development call DHCL at 1-800-841-2729 or 905-668-2020, or visit durham.ca/ChildDevelopment.



Keeping children's teeth healthy



Healthy teeth and gums are important as children grow. Healthy baby teeth are extremely important for eating healthy foods, speech development, keeping the space for adult teeth and smiling. Children should see a dental professional by their first birthday or within six months of eruption of the first tooth. Parents will find out the best ways to care for their child's teeth, resolve early dental issues and prevent future problems that could impact a child's school attendance, performance, and social skills. Practicing good oral health habits early will give children the best chance to live a cavity free life!

Have you heard about the Healthy Smiles Ontario (HSO) program?

The following streams of the program are available to help:

Healthy Smiles Ontario (HSO Core)

Healthy Smiles Ontario is a government-funded dental program that provides free preventive, routine, and emergency dental services for children and youth up to 17-years old from low-income households.

There is an application process that involves completing and mailing a form. Application forms are available online at Ontario.ca/healthysmiles or from Durham Region Health Department's Oral Health Division. The Oral Health Division will help navigate clients through this process. Having dental insurance does not exclude families from using HSO. Recipients of HSO can access dental care at Durham Region Health Department's Oral Health Clinic or at a private practice.

HSO Emergency and Essential Services (HSO EESS)

If a family does not qualify for the HSO Core stream but has a child with a dental problem, they can receive assistance for one year through HSO emergency and essential stream. For a child to qualify, they must be identified with a clinical need by an oral health professional, and the parent or guardian must declare financial hardship.

HSO Preventive Services Only (HSO PSO)

Children identified by public health staff as needing preventive care, and who do not have other dental problems, are eligible to receive free preventive services. These services include cleanings, pit and fissure sealants, and fluoride treatments at Durham Region Health Department's Oral Health Clinic.

If you have a family that does not have a dentist, or requires more information, contact Durham Region Health Department's Oral Health Division at 905-723-1365 ext. 4567 or durham.ca/oralhealth for assistance.

Helpful points for parents:

1. Brush your child's teeth for two minutes twice a day.
2. Bedtime is the most important time to brush teeth to prevent cavities.
3. Floss your child's teeth at least once a day to clean between teeth and under the gums.
4. You may begin using a small amount (size of a grain of rice) of fluoridated toothpaste only if your child can spit it out.
5. Do not let your child swallow or eat the toothpaste.
6. Continue to brush and floss your child's teeth until they are about eight or nine-years old.
7. Limit sugary snacks and drinks. If your child needs a drink between meals, water is best.



Your questions answered



Q:

**When do you need to wash your hands?
What are the correct handwashing steps?**

A:

When to wash your hands:

- After changing a diaper or helping a child with toileting.
- After removing single-use gloves (gloves are not a substitute for handwashing).
- When returning inside from outdoor play.
- Before, during and after food handling or preparation.
- Before eating or feeding a child.
- After contact with blood or body fluids, sneezing, coughing, or blowing your or a child's nose.
- Before and after touching eyes, nose or mouth.
- More frequently when the centre is in outbreak.
- After using the washroom.
- Whenever hands are visibly dirty.

***Note:** Alcohol-based hand sanitizer with 70 to 90 per cent alcohol can be used when water and soap are not available and when your hands are not visibly dirty.

How to wash your hands:

1. Wet hands with warm running water.
2. Apply soap.
3. Rub hands together and scrub all surfaces of the hands (fingertips, between fingers, back of hands, base of thumbs) for at least 20 seconds.
4. Rinse hands under water using a rubbing action to remove everything.
5. Dry hands with a clean towel, paper towel, or an air dryer.
6. Taps should be turned off using the towel, if available.

See our [handwashing poster](#) which can be posted at all handwashing sinks as a visual reminder of the steps when washing your hands.



Your questions answered



Q:

What are the diapering steps?

A:

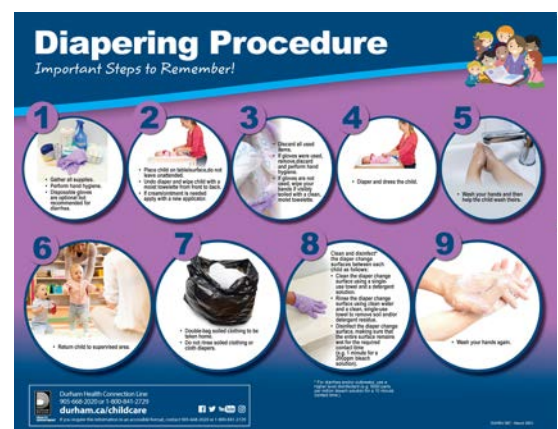
Diapering can expose staff, as well as children, to potentially infectious bodily fluids. Follow the steps below to reduce the spread of germs and illness in your centre, paying particular attention to handwashing, and cleaning and disinfection.

1. Gather all supplies and **perform hand hygiene**. Disposable gloves are optional but recommended for diarrhea.
2. Place child on diaper change surface and wipe child with a moist towelette. Apply cream/ointment with a new applicator (if needed).
3. **Perform hand hygiene.**
4. Diaper and dress the child.
5. **Wash your hands and then help the child wash theirs.**
6. Return child to supervised area.
7. Double-bag (do not rinse) soiled clothing/cloth diapers to be taken home .
8. Clean and disinfect* the diaper change surface between each child as follows:
 - o Clean the diaper change surface with a single-use towel and detergent solution.
 - o Rinse the diaper change surface with clean water and a clean, single-use towel.
 - o Disinfect the diaper change surface, allowing the surface to remain wet for the required contact time (e.g., 1 minute for a 200ppm bleach solution).

*For diarrhea and/or outbreaks, use a higher-level disinfectant (e.g., 5000 parts per million bleach solution for a 10-minute contact time).

9. Wash your hands again.

Make sure to post a copy of the [Diapering Procedure poster](#) at all diaper changing stations.



Your questions answered

Q:

Are children allowed to serve themselves during mealtime?

A:

Yes, self-service and family-style meals are permitted as long as the following measures are followed:

- Food handlers must always use safe food handling practices while storing, preparing, cooking, and serving food.
- No food provided by families/outside of the regular meal provision of the program (with exceptions).
- Children should not prepare food that will be shared with others.
- Ensure proper hand hygiene is practiced when staff are preparing food and children wash their hands before and after eating.
- Once prepared, keep cold foods at 4°C (40°F) or colder, and hot foods at 60°C (140°F) or hotter until service.
- Always use clean serving utensils to serve food.
- Discard food if it becomes contaminated (i.e., exposed to saliva, droplets from sneezing/coughing).
- Once the food has been served, discard any leftovers.



Your questions answered

Q:

Are sensory play activities permitted again?

A:

Yes, we have shifted back to pre-pandemic practices, including allowing sensory play activities. These may involve the use of items such as water, purchased sand, pasta/rice, playdough, pinecones, leaves and twigs. To reduce the risk of disease transmission during sensory play activities, implement the following infection control practices:

- Children must practice hand hygiene before and after participating in sensory play activities.
- Absorbent toys/items and straws must not be used for water play.
- Mouthed or contaminated toys/items must be removed from use and cleaned and disinfected prior to reuse.
- Dry sensory play bins must be cleaned and disinfected after the contents are discarded and before replenishing.
- Water play bins must be drained, cleaned, and disinfected after each session.
- Individual water play bins must be used for diapered children.
- Homemade playdough/goosey sensory materials:
 - With at least 30 per cent salt content: discarded immediately when contaminated.
 - With less than 30 per cent salt content: store in the refrigerator when not in use; discard immediately when contaminated; discard used product weekly (even if only used once).
 - Keep the playdough in the refrigerator when not in use will slow the growth of germs.
- Store-bought playdough must be discarded according to manufacturers' recommendations.
- Natural items such as pinecones, leaves and twigs must be discarded weekly, or more frequently if contaminated.
- Sensory play activities are not permitted if the centre is in outbreak.

See the [Cleaning and Disinfection Schedule](#) for more details.



REMINDER! Update your contact information

From time-to-time, there may be an urgent message that Durham Region Health Department will have to send to all child care centres. A current contact list will help us distribute the information to you more efficiently. If your centre has had any changes to your child care centre contacts, such as managers, supervisors, telephone numbers, or e-mail addresses, please forward the new information to veronica.memme@durham.ca to update the list.



Please print and post this e-newsletter in a common area for those who do not have access to email.

The WEE CARE Newsletter is published and distributed by Durham Region Health Department, Health Protection Division, and is distributed to licensed child care centers in Durham Region.

Questions, comments, and article submissions can be forwarded to Veronica Memme at veronica.memme@durham.ca.

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We would like to remind all child care centre owners, supervisors and staff that we welcome any suggestions that you may have for future article topics or ideas and any comments you have to improve the newsletter!

We welcome your ideas and suggestions!

Please submit comments by email to veronica.memme@durham.ca

