

**From:** Ontario News <[newsroom@ontario.ca](mailto:newsroom@ontario.ca)>

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**Subject:** Ontario Revises COVID-19 Screening Guidance for Schools and Child Care



*News Release*

**ONTARIO REVISES COVID-19 SCREENING GUIDANCE FOR SCHOOLS AND CHILD CARE**

October 1, 2020

**UPDATES REFLECT LATEST PUBLIC HEALTH ADVICE**

TORONTO — In consultation with the Chief Medical Officer of Health, the Ontario government is updating its COVID-19 school and child care screening guidance. This additional information will help parents determine when it is most appropriate for students, children and their families to seek a test for COVID-19.

The school and child care screening guidance is being updated with two sets of questions about symptoms and information to help parents make informed decisions about whether their children should attend school or child care, need to consult a health care provider, or get tested for COVID-19. The guidance can be found immediately at the [COVID-19 Screening Tool for Children in School and Child Care](#), and the refreshed online tool will launch on Friday, October 2 for download.

"Ensuring that children can attend school with minimal interruption is an important part of their healthy growth and development," said Dr. David Williams, Chief Medical Officer of Health. "Based on a review of the current evidence and consulting with paediatric infectious diseases experts, we are updating the list of symptoms in the COVID-19 screening tool for schools and child care to ensure that our children receive the education and care that they need while minimizing the risk of COVID-19 transmission."

The first set of questions asks about symptoms such as fever or cough. Students and children with any of these symptoms will still be advised to stay home until they are able to consult with a health care provider and receive an alternative diagnosis or a negative COVID-19 test.

The second set of questions asks about other symptoms that are commonly associated with other illnesses, such as a runny nose or headache:

- Students and children with only one of these symptoms will be advised to stay home for 24 hours, after which they can return to school or child care if their symptoms are improving.
- Students and children with two or more of these symptoms will be advised to stay home until they are able to consult with a health care provider and receive an alternative diagnosis or a negative COVID-19 test.

In addition, based on the latest public health guidance the symptom list for children in school and child care no longer includes abdominal pain or conjunctivitis (pink eye).

"We are grateful to Ontario's Chief Medical Officer of Health for contributing significantly to the development of Ontario's Back-to School Plan," said Education Minister Stephen Lecce. "Our focus continues to be on limiting the spread within our schools by listening to and acting upon the best available medical advice, which includes ensuring all layers of prevention are in place to keep kids safe."

#### QUICK FACTS

- With a recent increase in cases of COVID-19 it is critical for everyone to follow public health advice to continue to protect vulnerable populations and stop the spread. This includes: staying home when ill, or keeping your child home from school when ill; practising physical distancing with those outside your household; wearing a face covering when physical distancing is a challenge or where it is mandatory to do so; washing your hands frequently and thoroughly; and adhering to gathering limits and rules.
- For additional protection, the Ontario government is encouraging everyone to download the new COVID Alert app on their smart phone from the Apple and Google Play app stores.

#### ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- [New Public Health Measures Implemented Provincewide to Keep Ontarians Safe](#)

- [Ontario Limits the Size of Unmonitored and Private Social Gatherings across Entire Province](#)
- [Get the facts from Public Health Ontario on how to protect yourself and others](#)
- Visit Ontario's [website](#) to learn more about how the province continues to protect Ontarians from COVID-19.

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