

COVID-19 Fully Vaccinated Individuals: Case, Contact and Outbreak Management Interim Guidance

Version 1.0 – May 6, 2021

This guidance document provides basic information only. It is not intended to provide medical advice, diagnosis or treatment or legal advice.

In the event of any conflict between this guidance document and any orders or directives issued by the Minister of Health or the Chief Medical Officer of Health (CMOH), the order or directive prevails.

- Please check the Ministry of Health (MOH) [COVID-19 website](#) regularly for updates to this document, mental health resources, and other information,
- Please check the [Directives, Memorandums and Other Resources](#) page regularly for the most up to date directives.

Background:

Ontario started to roll out its [vaccine distribution implementation plan](#) in December 2020. The following are Ontario's COVID-19 vaccine program goals (in the order identified below):

1. Prevent deaths
2. Prevent illness, hospitalization and ICU admissions
3. Reduce transmission

The purpose of this **interim guidance document** is to supplement the [Management of Cases and Contacts of COVID-19](#) in Ontario guidance with updated recommendations for case and contact management of fully vaccinated individuals in Ontario.

This interim guidance **does not** apply to individuals who have an incomplete vaccine series (i.e. those that only received the first dose of a two-dose vaccine

series or individuals <14 days after receiving their second dose of a two-dose vaccine series, or individuals <14 days after a one-dose vaccine).

- Data is currently limited on vaccine effectiveness in individuals with immunocompromising conditions (e.g., organ or stem cell transplantation recipients, undergoing chemotherapy or immunosuppressive therapies). For these individuals, standard public health case and contact measures (as per [Management of Cases and Contacts of COVID-19](#)), including self-isolation after a high risk exposure should remain unchanged pending further information.

All partially and fully vaccinated individuals should continue to follow general public health guidance and recommended infection prevention and control measures.

Context

As Ontario enters phase 2 of vaccination rollout and given the emergence of Variants of Concern (VOC), the province is approaching revisions to case and contact management guidance with caution. Decisions around adjustment to case and contact management practices balance the significant protection offered by the COVID-19 vaccines, against the concerns of the unknown risks associated with VOCs and potential vaccine escape.

Evidence suggests that the vaccines may reduce COVID-19 transmission, either by preventing infection by severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) or by reducing the incidence of symptomatic disease. Additionally, Public Health Ontario is continuously monitoring the impact of vaccination and the emergence of SARS-CoV-2 VOCs including specifically those with potential vaccine escape (e.g., B.1.351 and P.1 variants) to inform and support decision-making related to relaxing individual, setting-specific and societal level public health measures.

As more evidence emerges regarding the spread of VOCs and the potential for vaccine escape, case and contact management measures for vaccinated individuals will be continuously reviewed and updated.

Definition of a Fully Vaccinated Individual

- An individual ≥ 14 days after receiving their second dose of a two-dose COVID-19 vaccine series or their first dose of a one-dose COVID-19 vaccine series.

- Confirmation of vaccination history is generally recommended for informing public health contact management guidance.
 - PHUs will assess vaccination status, accessing COVax^{ON} for proof of vaccination where possible or individuals can attest to their vaccination status until electronic records of vaccine dose administration are available through CCM.

Fully Vaccinated Individuals who are Symptomatic or Test Positive for SARS-CoV-2

Individuals Who Are Symptomatic

- All fully vaccinated individuals who have symptoms of COVID-19 should be managed in accordance with the [Management of Cases and Contacts of COVID-19](#) in Ontario guidance (self-isolate and be tested for SARS-CoV-2 immediately).
- Upon receiving a negative PCR test result, symptomatic individuals who are fully vaccinated can be cleared from isolation once symptoms have resolved for at least 24 hours (as per [Quick Reference Guidance on Clearance and Testing](#)).
 - Note: where a health practitioner has provided an alternative diagnosis, testing may not be required (as per [Quick Reference Guidance on Clearance and Testing](#)).

Individuals Who Test Positive

- All fully vaccinated individuals who test positive for SARS-CoV-2 should be managed in accordance with the [Management of Cases and Contacts of COVID-19](#) in Ontario guidance.

Fully Vaccinated Individuals who are Part of Outbreaks of SARS-CoV-2

- All fully vaccinated individuals should continue to be tested as part of outbreak investigations.

Fully Vaccinated Asymptomatic Individuals with High-Risk Exposures to Cases of SARS-CoV-2

This guidance applies to all individuals who are fully vaccinated (as per the definition above) including healthcare workers, non-healthcare workers and essential caregivers, but **excludes** residents of long-term care and retirement homes and patients admitted to health care settings.

- Asymptomatic individuals who are fully vaccinated with high-risk exposures are not required to self-isolate at home or in the community
- Asymptomatic individuals who are fully vaccinated with high-risk exposures should still be tested in accordance with the [Provincial Testing Guidance](#)
- Household members of individuals who are fully vaccinated with high risk exposures are not required to "stay at home except for essential reasons."
- Asymptomatic individuals who are fully vaccinated with high-risk exposures **must** report their exposure to their employer and follow any restrictions from work as specified by their manager and/or Occupational Health department.
- Fully vaccinated individuals who are household members of a symptomatic person are not required to stay at home until the symptomatic individual tests negative.
- In the event that the local public health unit has information about the VOC testing results of the index case (e.g., had known B.1.351 or P.1 lineage or E484K mutation) that the fully vaccinated individual was exposed to, self-isolation may still be required of the contact at the discretion of the local public health unit, as the vaccine effectiveness against these variants of concern is less well established.
 - If the contact is advised to self-isolate, household members of the asymptomatic and exposed individual should also be advised to stay at home except for essential reasons (e.g., attending school/work/buying groceries/picking up prescriptions).
 - For the most up to date mutations see Public Health Ontario's [VOC Surveillance page](#) and [FAQs](#).
- If the fully vaccinated individual with a high-risk exposure to a case becomes **symptomatic**, they must self-isolate immediately and get tested.
- At this time, travellers entering Canada are not excluded from *Federal Quarantine* requirements, even if they have been vaccinated. See the

Government of Canada "[Mandatory quarantine or isolation](#)" [webpage](#) for more information.

Residents of Long-term Care/Retirement Homes and Inpatients

- Fully vaccinated residents in long-term care and retirement homes and admitted patients with high-risk exposures to a case should continue to be quarantined and tested, even if they remain asymptomatic.
 - This is due to the higher risk of severe disease and death in this population, coupled with risk of transmission in long-term care and retirement homes and healthcare settings.
- In other situations where there is an increased risk to others should the fully vaccinated individual with high-risk exposure become a case (e.g., living in remote communities, living with individuals at increased risk for severe disease), self-isolation may also be recommended/required for the contact.

Table 1: At a Glance: Contact Management for Fully Vaccinated Individuals without Immunocompromise

Scenario	Population	Initial Contact Recommendations	Public Health Unit Follow-Up Responsibilities
Individuals who are fully vaccinated and symptomatic .	All individuals	Self-isolate and get tested	These individuals should be managed in accordance with the standard Management of Cases and Contacts of COVID-19 in Ontario and Quick Reference Guidance on Clearance and Testing .
Individuals who are fully vaccinated and test positive for SARS-CoV-2.	All individuals	Self-isolate	These individuals should be managed in accordance with the standard Management of Cases and Contacts of COVID-19 in Ontario guidance.
Individuals who are fully vaccinated and asymptomatic with a high-risk exposure to a case of SARS-CoV-2	Residents of high risk congregate living settings/ Inpatients	Self-isolate and get tested	These individuals should be managed in accordance with the standard Management of Cases and Contacts of COVID-19 in Ontario guidance.
	Healthcare Workers	Not required to self-isolate. Get tested.	These individuals must report exposure to employer and/or Occupational Health Department and follow any work restriction requirements.
	All other individuals	Not required to self-isolate. Get tested.	These individuals must report exposure to employer and/or Occupational Health Department and follow any work restriction requirements.