Ontario

Ministry of Health

COVID-19 Screening Tool for Children in School and Child Care

Version 1 – October 1, 2020

This tool provides basic information only and contains recommendations for children to support decision making by parents about whether their child should attend school/childcare and/or needs to be tested for COVID-19. This can be used to assess symptoms of any child who attends child care or school (elementary and high school). It is not to be used as a clinical assessment tool or intended to take the place of medical advice, diagnosis or treatment. Screening must occur daily and at home before a child enters school or child care.

When assessing for the symptoms below, you should focus on evaluating if they are **new, worsening, or different from your child's baseline health status or usual state** (check off "Yes"). Symptoms associated with known chronic health conditions or related to other known causes/conditions should not be considered unless new, different or worsening (check off "No"). (see examples below).

After developing symptoms, in general, children should no longer have a fever and their symptoms improving to be able to return to school/child care. Mild symptoms known to persist in young children (e.g. runny nose or mild cough that may persist following infections) may be ongoing at time of return to school/child care if other symptoms have resolved.

Required Screening Questions

1. Does your child have any of the following **new or worsening** symptoms? *Symptoms should not be chronic or related to other known causes or conditions.*

Fever and/or chills (temperature of 37.8˚C/100.0˚F or greater)	☐ Yes	☐ No
Cough (more than usual if chronic cough) including croup (barking cough, making a whistling noise when breathing) *Not related to other known causes or conditions (e.g., asthma, reactive airway)*	☐ Yes	☐ No

Shortness of breath (dyspnea, out of breath, unable to breathe deeply, wheeze, that is worse than usual if chronically short of breath) *Not related to other known causes or conditions (e.g., asthma)*	☐ Yes	☐ No
Decrease or loss of smell or taste (new olfactory or taste disorder) *Not related to other known causes or conditions (e.g., nasal polyps, allergies, neurological disorders)*	☐ Yes	☐ No

2. Does your child have any of the following **new or worsening** symptoms? *Symptoms should not be chronic or related to other known causes or conditions.*

Sore throat (painful swallowing or difficulty swallowing) *Not related to other known causes or conditions (e.g., post nasal drip, gastroesophageal reflux)*	☐ Yes	☐ No
Stuffy nose and/or runny nose (nasal congestion and/or rhinorrhea) *Not related to other known causes or conditions (e.g., seasonal allergies, returning inside from the cold, chronic sinusitis unchanged from baseline, reactive airways)*	☐ Yes	☐ No
Headache that is new and persistent, unusual, unexplained, or long-lasting *Not related to other known causes or conditions (e.g., tension-type headaches, chronic migraines)*	☐ Yes	☐ No
Nausea, vomiting and/or diarrhea *Not related to other known causes or conditions (e.g. transient vomiting due to anxiety in children, chronic vestibular dysfunction, irritable bowel syndrome, inflammatory bowel disease, side effect of medication)*	☐ Yes	☐ No

Fatigue, lethargy, muscle aches or malaise (general feeling of being unwell, lack of energy, extreme tiredness, poor feeding in infants) that is unusual or unexplained *Not related to other known causes or conditions (e.g., depression, insomnia, thyroid dysfunction, anemia)*	☐ Yes	☐ No

3. Has your child travelled outside of Canada in the past 14 days?

☐ Yes ☐ No

4. Has your child been identified as a close contact of someone who is confirmed as having COVID-19 by your local public health unit (or from the COVID Alert app if they have their own phone)?

☐ Yes ☐ No

5. Has your child been directed by a health care provider including public health official to isolate?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Results of Screening Questions:

If you answered "YES" to any of the symptoms included under question 1:

- Your child should stay home to isolate immediately.
- Contact your child's health care provider for further advice or assessment, including if your child needs a COVID-19 test or other treatment.

If you answered "YES" to only one of the symptoms included under question 2:

- Your child should stay home for 24 hours from when the symptom started.
- If the symptom is improving, your child may return to school/child care when they feel well enough to do so. A negative COVID-19 test is not required to return.
- If the symptom persists or worsens, contact your child's health care provider for further advice or assessment, including if your child needs a COVID-19 test or other treatment.

If you answered "YES" to two or more of the symptoms included under question 2:

- Your child should stay home to isolate immediately.
- Contact your child's health care provider for further advice or assessment, including if your child needs a COVID-19 test or other treatment.

If the individual answers "YES" to question 3, 4 or 5

- Your child should stay home to isolate immediately and follow the advice of public health.
- If your child develops symptoms, you should contact your local public health unit or the health care provider for further advice.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. **My child has woken up not feeling well, what do I do?**
   If you notice that your child has new or worsening symptoms, what you do depends on the symptom and how usual they are for your child.

   If your child has new or worsening:
   - Fever/chills
   - Cough
   - Shortness of breath
   - Decreased or loss of smell or taste

   Your child should isolate immediately and you should contact your child's health provider for further advice or assessment. The health care provider can help you determine whether the symptoms are related to another non-COVID-19 condition, or if they should get tested for COVID-19.

   If your child has **ONE** new or worsening symptom (that is not related to a known cause or condition) that include:
   - Sore throat
   - Stuffy nose/runny nose
   - Headache
   - Nausea/vomiting/diarrhea
   - Fatigue/lethargy/muscle aches/malaise

   Your child should stay home for 24 hours to be monitored to see whether the symptoms get better or worse. If they start to feel better and symptoms are improving, they can return to school/child care when well enough to do so and no COVID-19 testing is needed.

   If the symptoms get worse, you should contact their health care provider for further advice or assessment. The health care provider can help you determine whether the symptoms are related to another non-COVID-19 condition, or if they should get tested for COVID-19.

   If your child has **TWO or MORE** new or worsening symptoms (that are not related to a known cause or condition) that include:
   - Sore throat
   - Stuffy nose/runny nose
   - Headache

- Nausea and/or vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Fatigue/lethargy/muscle aches or malaise

Your child should isolate immediately and you should contact your child's health provider for further advice or assessment. The health care provider can help you determine whether the symptoms are related to another non-COVID-19 condition, or if they should get tested for COVID-19.

2. **My child has a runny nose, what should I do?**
   If your child's only symptom is a runny nose, you should keep your child home and monitor their symptoms as you would in any other year. When they feel better, they are ready to go back to school/child care and no COVID-19 testing is needed. If they get worse or develop other symptoms, you should contact their health care provider for more advice. Mild symptoms known to persist in young children (e.g., runny nose) may be ongoing at time of return to school/child care if other symptoms have been resolved.

3. **Who in my family needs to be tested along with my child?**
   If your child has been identified as needing a test and everyone else in the family is well, no testing of other family members is needed. If your child tests positive for COVID-19, the local public health unit will contact you/your child and make a plan for additional testing of all close contacts.

4. **Do I need a note from a doctor before my child goes back to school/child care or a copy of a negative test result?**
   No, you do not need a note from your doctor or proof of a negative test before your child returns to school/ childcare.

5. **I need more information to feel confident in my assessment, what do I do?**
   If you need additional information about COVID-19 or have a question specific to your child and their health, please contact your health care provider.