

December 06, 2021

Dear Parents/Guardians,

With the end of 2021 quickly approaching, Peel Public Health wishes to thank you for continued efforts to protect students and schools from COVID-19. This letter provides information on expanded options for COVID-19 PCR diagnostic testing in schools and pharmacies and reminders about international travel over the holidays.

### **COVID-19 PCR Diagnostic Testing at Pharmacies**

The Ministry of Health has recently expanded COVID-19 PCR diagnostic testing at participating pharmacies across the province. To find a pharmacy or testing centre that provides **free** COVID-19 testing for exposed or symptomatic individuals near you, please enter your postal code into the provincial testing location [finder](#).

You may filter pharmacy locations by those that:

- Perform symptomatic and asymptomatic testing
- Accept school PCR self-collection kits

For testing locations that offer saliva testing and walk-in appointments, visit our [website](#).

### **School-based take home COVID-19 tests**

Two types of self-collected COVID-19 tests will be available at your school to take home starting in the next couple of weeks.

1) COVID-19 PCR diagnostic tests:

- Given to students with symptoms of COVID-19 or who are isolating because of a COVID-19 exposure at school
- Dropped off at a pharmacy that accepts COVID-19 school PCR self-collection kits

2) COVID-19 rapid antigen tests for the winter break:

- Offered to all students to test at home over the holidays
- Used only for people without symptoms of COVID-19 during the higher risk time of gathering with family and friends
- Students who get a positive result on a rapid antigen test must isolate and get a PCR diagnostic test as soon as possible

More information on these take home tests will be sent from your school when they become available.

### **Holiday Travel**

For all travellers, completing a two-dose primary series of vaccination, obtaining a booster if eligible, and continued vigilance with precautions is recommended regardless of where one might travel within Canada or abroad.

Should you decide to travel this holiday season, be mindful that community transmission of COVID-19 is increasing across Canada and in many countries.

## **Health Services**

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Even though being fully vaccinated offers strong protection from serious illness, the risk for contracting COVID-19 still exists and the impacts of Omicron on vaccine effectiveness are still unknown. If you are planning to travel abroad, please carefully and regularly consider the Government of Canada COVID-19 travel advice regarding [boarding flights and trains](#), [testing](#), and [vaccination](#) which is subject to change with the evolving COVID-19 picture both in Canada and around the world. Likewise, please consider the following recommendations:

- Be [fully vaccinated](#) by completing an approved [COVID-19 vaccine series](#) at least 14 days before travelling. If eligible, get a booster dose of vaccine before travelling: [Getting the COVID-19 vaccine | COVID-19 \(coronavirus\) in Ontario](#)
- Note: Fully vaccinated is defined as having received at least two doses of a Government of Canada-accepted COVID-19 vaccine or a mix of two accepted vaccines (or at least one dose of a Johnson & Johnson vaccine) AND having received the second dose at least 14 full days prior to the day of travel.
- For individuals who are **not fully vaccinated**, non-essential travel is not recommended. This includes children who are under 12 years of age who are not fully vaccinated.
- Regardless of vaccination status, you should:
  - stay informed of COVID-19 activity, including detection of variants of concern such as Omicron, at your destination
  - use personal protective measures (like wearing a mask, washing hands and maintaining physical distancing where possible)
  - follow any additional local public health measures while travelling
  - avoid all cruise ship travel outside of Canada
  - check [Canadian travel requirements](#)

Returning to Canada from international travel

**All travellers should closely check the Canadian government travel website for any updates to testing and isolation requirements on return: [COVID-19: Travel, testing and borders - Travel.gc.ca](#)** and, if travelling abroad, should also be aware of COVID-19 entry requirements and measures in force in their country of destination.

	<a href="#">Fully vaccinated</a> individuals*	<a href="#">Not fully vaccinated</a> individuals and children under 5 years old
<b>Isolation Requirements</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Exempt** from quarantine (unless they have travelled from certain countries).</li> <li>● Required to show proof of vaccination using the ArriveCan app (if 12 years of age or older).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Required to use the ArriveCan app to demonstrate the presence of a suitable 14-day quarantine plan. Such individuals must go directly to their suitable place of quarantine and remain there for at least 14 days or as directed by a screening or quarantine officer.</li> </ul>

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<p><b>Testing Requirements</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not required to show proof of a negative COVID-19 test to re-enter the country if taking trips outside of the country <u>for 72 hours or less.</u></li> <li>• For trips &gt;72 hours, you are required to show proof of a negative COVID-19 <a href="#">pre-entry molecular test</a> taken within 72 hours before the scheduled flight OR proof of a previous positive test result taken between 14 and 90 days prior to arrival.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Required to show proof of a negative COVID-19 pre-entry molecular test taken within 72 hours before the scheduled flight OR proof of a previous positive test result taken between 14 and 90 days prior to arrival.</li> <li>• Required to take an arrival test</li> <li>• Required to take a Day-8 test.</li> <li>• Children under 5 are exempt from the testing requirements if asymptomatic</li> </ul>
<p><b>Return to School</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May <a href="#">return to school</a> if the individual:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o tested negative on the pre-entry molecular test/demonstrated a previous positive test result taken between 14 and 90 days prior to arrival,</li> <li>o is asymptomatic,</li> <li>o Is not immunocompromised,</li> <li>o was <u>not</u> told to quarantine and/or to not attend school/child care at the border, and</li> <li>o did not travel to one or more of the 10 countries** of interest in</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Must not attend school or childcare until their 14-day quarantine period is complete. After the 14-day quarantine period is over, such individuals may return to school if they pass the COVID-19 school and child care <a href="#">screening tool</a> and bring back the <a href="#">Return to School Form</a></li> </ul>

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	<p>Africa with respect to the Omicron variant.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o passed the COVID-19 school and child care <a href="#">screening tool and bring back the Return to School Form</a></li> </ul>	
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\* Fully vaccinated is defined as having received at least two doses of a Government of Canada-accepted COVID-19 vaccine or a mix of two accepted vaccines (or at least one dose of a Johnson & Johnson vaccine) AND have received the second dose at least 14 full days prior to the day of travel.

\*\* Due to the prevalence of the Omicron variant in Africa, all individuals (regardless of vaccination status) who have already arrived in Canada from Egypt, Malawi, Nigeria, South Africa, Namibia, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Lesotho, Eswatini, and Botswana in the past two weeks will be contacted and directed to get tested and quarantine as they await their test results. Until at least January 31, 2022, all individuals who have travelled to these countries will not be allowed to enter Canada.

**Please note that certain destinations may be subject to additional measures under federal regulations. Travellers should continue to review federal guidance at <http://travel.gc.ca/travel-covid> throughout their trip and prior to their return to obtain the most up to date advice.**

Thank you and best wishes for a safe holiday season ahead.



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