



Renfrew County and District Health Unit
"Optimal Health for All in Renfrew County and District"

For Immediate Release

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Renfrew County Residents Are Reminded That Emergency Departments Are for Urgent Care, Not Asymptomatic COVID-19 Testing or The Treatment of Mild COVID-19 Symptoms

With increased community transmission of COVID-19 and in particular, the new Omicron variant of concern, Renfrew County hospitals are also seeing an increase in the number of asymptomatic residents presenting at local Emergency Departments for a COVID-19 test or for the treatment of mild cold-like symptoms which are likely an indication they have the virus.

While all Emergency Departments remain open and available to treat those in need of urgent care, Dr. Robert Cushman, Acting Medical Officer of Health is reminding residents that Emergency Departments are not the place for asymptomatic testing, or the treatment of mild symptoms presumed to be affiliated with the virus.

In fact, according to the new provincial COVID-19 testing guidance which came into effect December 31, 2021, PCR testing eligibility has been greatly reduced. Highlights of the new guidance include the following:

- Symptomatic testing is available for high-risk individuals, and individuals who work in high-risk settings.
- Individuals with symptoms consistent with COVID-19 are now presumed positive and should follow isolation and/or self-monitoring guidelines.
- Testing for asymptomatic contacts of cases is generally no longer recommended – unless directed by Public Health.
- Positive rapid antigen tests no longer require PCR confirmation. Individuals who now test positive using a rapid antigen test must follow isolation guidelines.

"We recognize that there is a certain amount of stress and anxiety that comes from seeing increased transmission in our communities and that asymptomatic individuals want reassurance that they are well, however, these individuals need to stay home, follow the latest isolation and self-monitoring guidance and connect with their primary care physician or the Renfrew County Virtual Triage and Assessment Centre if they have questions about their health or what they should do," said Dr. Cushman.

The service is available 24/7 by calling 1-844-727-6404.

For all the latest information about testing, isolation, self-monitoring, and other items related to COVID-19, visit the Renfrew County and District Health Unit website at www.rcdhu.com.

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