

## Health PEI Health Care Workers Frequently Asked Questions

The following FAQs have been developed through the COVID-19 Joint Response Team and Health PEI Human Resources to help inform Health PEI staff and physicians as the province details its approach to on-going COVID-19 public health measures.

For the purpose of this document, all employees of Health PEI involved in providing care and/or services within Health PEI facilities and programs are considered Health Care Workers, referenced throughout the document as HCWs. This also includes physicians, students, volunteers, and contract workers.

Health PEI is also committed to sharing regular updates to all members of the organization. ***These FAQs may change over time, and this document will be updated as new information becomes available.***

Updated information, including information for health care providers, will be made available:

- Through the website: [www.princeedwardisland.ca/coronavirus](http://www.princeedwardisland.ca/coronavirus)
- By calling Public Health at 1-800-958-6400
- On the Health PEI Staff Resource Centre webpage: <https://src.healthpei.ca/>
- Managers will post hard copies on the OH&S bulletin boards in each work site for those without access to email.

Questions regarding benefits leave and work requirements should be directed to your Human Resources Manager.

*If you have further Human Resource related questions that are not answered in this FAQ, you can email them to [COVID-19 Employee Information@ihis.org](mailto:COVID-19 Employee Information@ihis.org).*

*You will not receive a direct response to your question; however, the response will be considered for updating future FAQs. You can also contact your HR Manager if you require a direct response. This information will be updated on a regular basis and can be found on the Staff Resource Centre.*

*Services continue to be available via telephone through the Employee Assistance Program (EAP). Please contact the EAP program if you require additional support. EAP services can be arranged by contacting 902.368.5738 or 1.800.239.3826 or [eap@gov.pe.ca](mailto:eap@gov.pe.ca)*

**Q: I am a HCW and have not been vaccinated. Will I be tested for COVID-19?**

**A:** As of September 24, 2021, per direction from the Chief Public Health Office (CPHO), all HCW's who have only received a first dose of vaccine, or are unvaccinated, must be screened with a Covid-19 rapid test. This direction includes HCW's who do not have direct interaction with patients, residents or clients.

**Q: I am a HCW and have not been vaccinated. How frequently will I be tested for COVID-19?**

**A:** All HCW's in HPEI facilities who have only received a first dose of vaccine, or are unvaccinated, will be tested up to a maximum of 3 times per week depending on work schedule. Frequency of rapid testing will be no greater than 48 hours before the start of a shift. Staff who work full time will be expected to space out the three required tests to the best of their ability throughout the week.

*Work Schedule Examples*

HCW works full time each week: Tests will be spaced out up to a maximum of 3 per week.

HCW works 1 shift per week: 1 test completed per shift.

HCW works 2 consecutive shifts weekly: Test twice, once per shift.

HCW works 3 consecutive shifts weekly: Test three times, once per shift.

**Q: I am a HCW, have not been vaccinated and am required to participate in rapid testing. Will my rapid tests have to be witnessed and can I take test kits home to complete?**

**A:** Appropriate safety precautions, in accordance with the manufacturer's label, must be taken for all rapid antigen tests to ensure the safety of the individual being tested as well as the individual witnessing the specimen collection. Rapid testing is conducted through a self-testing method; the specimen collection must be overseen and witnessed by a designated person at the facility in order to be compliant. Examples of witnesses can be an administrator, supervisor, clinical lead or staff member identified for the role. The test kit must be completed at the work site and be witnessed, therefore, kits cannot be taken home.

**Q: I am a HCW and I am experiencing symptoms of Covid-19. Should I participate in rapid testing?**

**A:** Rapid testing is NOT for anyone who has any symptoms of COVID-19. The tests are not to be used by anyone with symptoms or who has a known exposure to COVID-19 for the purposes of work place screening. Symptomatic and exposed individuals must follow current Public Health guidance in relation to any exposure notifications. Anyone with symptoms should be tested at a testing location using a lab based Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) test.

**Q: I am a HCW and am required to participate in regular Covid-19 rapid testing. What happens if I have a positive result?**

**A:** If a HCW's rapid test result is positive (considered a presumptive positive), they are to notify their supervisor and are to obtain a test (polymerase chain reaction – PCR) from an approved Covid-19 testing site. HCW's with a positive rapid test result are to self-identify at the testing facility. They must self-isolate immediately until receiving a negative test (PCR) result from the testing facility.

**Q: I am a HCW employed with HPEI, have not been fully vaccinated, and require regular Covid-19 testing in compliance with the CPHO Order. Will I be compensated for the time required to complete the rapid testing?**

**A:** As with previous CPHO directives requiring testing; the testing was conducted off site at COVID-19 clinics and the Employer provided no additional compensation, as this was not an Employer requirement, but adherence to a public health order.

The Employer will be moving forward with the same approach; however, testing will no longer be off-site, but on-site at HPEI facilities. There will be no additional compensation for prior testing.

**Q: I am a HCW, have not been fully vaccinated, and am refusing regular Covid-19 testing in compliance with the CPHO Order. Will I be compensated or re-assigned?**

**A:** All unvaccinated HCW's in HPEI facilities, must be screened with a Covid-19 rapid test as per CPHO Order effective Sept. 24, 2021. Unvaccinated HCW who refuse to participate in rapid testing will be placed on an unapproved leave, which will be unpaid, and will not be re-assigned.

**Q: I am a HCW and have not been fully vaccinated due to a medical exemption. Am I still required to participate in mandatory rapid testing?**

**A:** All unvaccinated HCW's in HPEI facilities, regardless of exemption status, must participate in Covid-19 rapid testing in keeping with the CPHO Order. Medical contraindication to the Covid-19 vaccine should be issued by the Health Care Workers most responsible health care provider and filed in their employment file. See Appendix A Covid-19 Vaccine Medical Exemption Form in the Covid-19 Immunization and Management Policy.

**Q: I am a HCW who has been fully vaccinated, however, my manager/supervisor have received a report stating an incorrect vaccination status. Where and how do I provide my correct vaccination record?**

**A:** Health Care Workers who have been fully immunized (2 doses + 14 days) are able to provide proof of vaccination from the Government of Prince Edward Island Dept. of Health and Wellness website immunization record: <https://www.princeedwardisland.ca/en/information/health-and-wellness/covid-19-immunization-record>.

The immunization record is to be provided to their site Employee Health Nurse or Wellness and Safety Occupational Health and Safety LPN (confidential email: [healthpeiohs@ihis.org](mailto:healthpeiohs@ihis.org)).

**Q: I am a HCW who has been fully vaccinated out of province and/or I am a new hire of Health PEI. Where and how do I provide my correct vaccination record?**

**A:** Health Care Workers who have been fully immunized (2 doses + 14 days) are able to provide proof of vaccination from their respective province (if received out of province) or from Government of Prince Edward Island Dept. of Health and Wellness website immunization record (if vaccinated in PEI): <https://www.princeedwardisland.ca/en/information/health-and-wellness/covid-19-immunization-record>.

The immunization record is to be provided to their site Employee Health Nurse or Wellness and Safety Occupational Health and Safety LPN (confidential email: [healthpeiohs@ihis.org](mailto:healthpeiohs@ihis.org)).

**Q: I am a HCW and I have privacy concerns regarding the disclosure of vaccination status?**

**A:** The collection and use of staff vaccine information falls under the rules for personal information in the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act. The Health Information Act, expressly states that it does not apply to information collected pursuant to the Public Health Act, which includes immunization information.

Health PEI, as a public body, is permitted under the FOIPP Act to collect, use and disclose personal information for the purposes of managing personnel and also other purposes related to public safety. Therefore, disclosure of Covid-19 vaccination status for the purposes of job duties (ie. staff scheduling and monitoring staff compliance with the policy) does not pose a privacy concern.

**Q: If HCWs are required by the Chief Public Health Office to self-isolate (\*specific to scenarios outside of a travel-related restriction), and are asymptomatic, can we use sick time?**

**A:** Should HCWs who are asymptomatic (not experiencing symptoms) be required to self-isolate, they will be placed on paid administrative leave, this includes casuals who had shifts that were pre-booked.

Some HCWs may have the option/ability to do telework from home. Please discuss this option with your Manager/Supervisor if applicable.

Should a HCW develop any symptoms of COVID-19, such as fatigue, aches, fever, cough and difficulty breathing, they should **visit a no-appointment required testing site or call [1-855-354-4358](tel:1-855-354-4358)** for screening to determine whether a test is appropriate. Once symptomatic, paid administrative leave ends and standard sick leave begins as outlined in the respective collective agreement.

If a HCW tests positive for COVID-19, they will be required to continue to self-isolate and follow medical advice. This may extend past the 14-day self-isolation period.

It is important to notify your Manager/Supervisor **immediately** as to changes in your status.

For detailed information related to specific circumstances, please reach out to your Human Resource Manager.

**Q: My child/dependent is symptomatic, required to be tested and is being sent home from school/daycare. Am I required to self-isolate? Am I eligible for leave?**

**A:** If the child is symptomatic and unable to self-isolate alone (either due to age or ability) while awaiting test results, and no one other than the HCW can provide for the needs of the child,

HCWs may access family illness leave as per their respective collective agreement until the test results are returned or such time as they are able to leave self-isolation as per CPHO.

HCWs are expected to ensure they access testing for the child/dependent as soon as possible.

**Q: My child/dependent has been identified by CPHO as a close contact of an active case, is being sent home from school/daycare and is required to be tested. Am I required to self-isolate? Am I eligible for leave?**

**A:** In circumstances where the child is asymptomatic but required to self-isolate and unable to self-isolate alone (either due to age or ability), paid administrative leave is available to the HCW for child care purposes.

HCWs are expected to ensure they access testing for the child/dependent as soon as possible.

**Q: I am a Long Term Care HCW who arrived in PEI from travel within Canada. Do I have to self-isolate and will I be tested?**

**A:** HCWs with a PEI pass working in LTC are not required to self-isolate or complete testing. If the HCW in LTC is unvaccinated, **PCR** testing will occur at day 0-1 and day 8 and they cannot return to work until the period of self-isolation is complete. People working in LTC are not eligible to work-isolate.

**Q: I have travelled within Atlantic Canada, will I have to isolate and will I be tested?**

**A:** There is no self-isolation requirement for fully or partially vaccinated PEI resident HCWs returning to PEI from the Atlantic provinces with a PEI Pass. Unvaccinated PEI resident HCWs returning from Atlantic Canada will adhere to the following [work isolation](#) protocol;

- Complete a self-declaration
- Testing for the HCW will occur at day 0-1, day 4 and day 8
- HCW must test negative prior to start of work isolation.

**Q: I am a HCW in PEI returning from travel within Canada, will I have to isolate and will I be tested?**

**A:** There is no self-isolation requirement for fully vaccinated PEI resident HCWs returning to PEI from the within Canada with a PEI Pass. Unvaccinated HCWs, and those with only one dose of Covid-19 vaccine, returning from within Canada will adhere to the following work isolation protocol;

- Complete a self-declaration
- Testing for the HCW will occur at day 0-1, day 4 and day 8
- HCW must test negative prior to start of work isolation.

**Q: I have arrived in PEI from travel outside of Canada. When will I be tested?**

**A:** If the HCW has a [federal exemption](#) and a PEI Pass they do not require work isolation or testing. If the HCW has a federal exemption and no PEI Pass then testing will occur at day 0-1 and day 8 and

are not permitted to work until they finish their period of self-isolation. HCWs without a federal exemption or PEI Pass are required to self-isolate for 14 days with 8 of these days being on PEI with testing.

**Q: I am a HCW and have tested positive; I have had 2 doses of the vaccine. When can I return to work?**

**A:** The HCW can return to work once they are cleared by CPHO.

**Q: I am a close contact of a positive case. How will I be monitored? Will I be tested?**

**A:** Fully vaccinated HCWs will monitor for symptoms and only self-isolate if they become symptomatic. Partially vaccinated and unvaccinated staff will self-isolate for 14 days with testing.

**Q: What do I do if I was at an identified exposure location?**

**A:** If you were present at an exposure location follow all direction from the Chief Public Health Office in relation to the exposure location(s). You must notify your supervisor or manager.