



NORTHUMBERLAND HILLS HOSPITAL

NEWS RELEASE – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NHH COVID-19 Assessment Centre will shift to appointment only, beginning Tuesday, September 29

Walk-in bookings will no longer be accepted as the province works to ensure resources are directed to those who need them most

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY, Monday, September 28, 2020—Provincial direction with regard to COVID-19 testing has been updated on the advice of the Chief Medical Officer of Health to prioritize those at greatest risk while shifting away from untargeted asymptomatic testing.

Effective Tuesday, September 29, the NHH COVID-19 Assessment Centre, located adjacent to the NHH Emergency Department at 1000 DePalma Drive, will shift to an appointment-only service.

Local residents are encouraged to schedule an appointment with the NHH COVID-19 Assessment Centre only if they:

- are showing [COVID-19 symptoms](#);
- have been exposed to a confirmed case of the virus, as informed by the public health unit or exposure notification through the COVID Alert app;
- are a resident or worker in a setting that has a COVID-19 outbreak, as identified and informed by the public health unit; or
- are eligible for testing as part of a targeted testing initiative directed by the Ministry of Health or the Ministry of Long-Term Care.

Appointments may be booked by calling the NHH COVID-19 Assessment Centre directly at 905-377-7783. Note please that call volume is presently high.

Those who are not showing symptoms and are part of a vulnerable population including residents or workers in an at-risk setting such as a long-term care home, homeless shelter or other congregate setting, may also get tested for COVID-19 at one of up [to 60 pharmacies now approved to test for COVID-19 in eligible individuals](#). Additional pharmacy locations for those without symptoms are expected to be available in the coming days.

For a full listing of the Ontario pharmacies currently offering this service, and the approximately 150 Assessment Centres now open, please visit [Ontario.ca/covidtest](https://ontario.ca/covidtest).

As always, those with severe symptoms should call 9-1-1 or proceed to the nearest Emergency Department.

Northumberland Hills Hospital continues to work with [Ontario Health Team of Northumberland](#) partners to plan for the introduction of additional local testing capacity as appropriate.

“Ontario has had to adapt its approach to testing,” said Linda Davis, NHH President and CEO. “Testing is currently shifting to target those who are symptomatic, have had close contact with a confirmed case, are part of an outbreak investigation, and asymptomatic individuals (those without symptoms) who work or live in at-risk settings.”

By doing this, Ontario will be better able to test those who need it most.

“While we have been able to offer a walk-in service up until this point,” added Davis, “the line-ups outside our Assessment Centre are growing daily and, as such, we are moving today to shift to appointment-only bookings. This will help our team to provide phone advice to those who are not sure if they should come to be tested or not, and it will hopefully keep those who do not require testing at this time from waiting unnecessarily.”

“I want to thank all the members of our Assessment Centre who are working very hard alongside community partners including local primary care providers, Northumberland Paramedics and public health to sustain this critical service and prioritize what is clearly a growing demand,” added Davis. “Since opening the NHH COVID-19 Assessment Centre on Saturday, March 14, more than **14,348** tests have been completed (as of Monday, September 28), inclusive of patients seen in our hospital’s outpatient COVID-19 Assessment Centre, inpatients (i.e. those in hospital who require testing) as well as those seen through community outreach, such as to local retirement homes and Alderville First Nation, in collaboration with Northumberland Paramedics.”

For further information, including a link to Ontario’s online self-assessment tool to help determine if you need a COVID-19 test, to find a test location, check your results or screen school-age children before they depart for school, visit: <https://covid-19.ontario.ca/>

NHH continues to recommend the COVID Alert mobile app. Released in Ontario in late July, the free COVID Alert app lets you know if you may have been exposed to the virus. You can then get tested and keep you and your community safe. The app is voluntary. The more people who choose to use it, the more effective it will be at stopping the spread of COVID-19.

Available in the Apple or Google app stores, COVID Alert is:

- **Free.**
- **Easy to use.** Install it and stay safe on your daily journey.
- **Safe and private.** It never collects your health information, location or identity.

For more information, and links to download COVID Alert, visit: <https://covid-19.ontario.ca/covidalert>

Media contact: Jennifer Gillard, Senior Director, Public Affairs and Strategic Partnerships, jgillard@nhh.ca or 905-377-7757.

About Northumberland Hills Hospital – Located approximately 100 kilometres east of Toronto, NHH delivers a broad range of acute, post-acute, outpatient and diagnostic services. Acute services include emergency and intensive care, medical/surgical care, obstetrical care and palliative care. Post-acute specialty services (PASS) include restorative care and rehabilitation. Mental health care, chemotherapy, dialysis and 16 other ambulatory care clinics are offered on an outpatient basis through partnerships with regional centres and nearby specialists. NHH offers a full range of diagnostic services, including magnetic resonance imaging (MRI), computed tomography (CT) and mammography. The hospital serves the catchment area of west Northumberland County. A mixed urban and rural population of approximately 60,000 residents, west Northumberland comprises the Town of Cobourg, the Municipality of Port Hope and the townships of Hamilton, Cramahe and Alwick/Haldimand. NHH employs approximately 600 people and relies on the additional support provided by physicians and volunteers. NHH is an active member of Ontario Health (East) – formerly the Central East Local Health Integration Network. For more information, please visit www.nhh.ca or follow us on Twitter [@NorHillsHosp](https://twitter.com/NorHillsHosp).

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