



JOINT NEWS RELEASE – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Worrying that you may have COVID-19? Local screening and assessment services are here and ready to help

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY, Friday, April 17, 2020 – The Northumberland Hills Hospital (NHH) COVID-19 Assessment Centre continues to provide local COVID-19 screening and assessment services for individuals of all ages. In addition, NHH is today announcing that COVID-19 Assessment Centre team members will expand an existing partnership with Northumberland Paramedics to proactively reach out to organizations and groups in west Northumberland to offer on-site testing and support in the community.

Opened just over one month ago, when the first local case of COVID-19 was identified, staff and physicians in the COVID-19 Assessment Centre have had over 1,064 connections, virtually or in person, with individuals concerned that they may have COVID-19. Of those, more than 277 have been tested.

Testing is a central component of the provincial response to COVID-19. Further to the [recent provincial direction](#) to expand and enhance testing for COVID-19 across Ontario, the NHH Centre is now encouraging patients with both typical and atypical symptoms of the virus to reach out for advice and, as appropriate, screening. These symptoms now include:

- Fever/chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath
- Sore throat
- Runny nose
- Nasal congestion
- Difficulty swallowing
- Unexplained fatigue
- Unexplained headache
- Joint/muscle aches
- Loss of taste or smell

Individuals who believe they may have had exposure to COVID-19, either in the community or through travel, and who are experiencing a new or unusual onset of any of

the symptoms listed above, are asked to contact any of the following for the preliminary virtual screening:

- NHH COVID-19 Assessment Centre - 905-377-7783
- HKPR District Health Unit – 1-866-888-4577 ext. 5020
- Telehealth Ontario – 1-866-797-0000

OR complete [the online self-screening tool](#).

Also in support of the provincial direction, NHH and Northumberland Paramedics will expand an existing partnership to include outreach to the community, offering on-site testing and support for Alderville First Nation, area long-term care residences, retirement homes, communal living environments, and others, as required.

New hours of operation for NHH COVID-19 Assessment Centre

To accommodate the NHH COVID-19 Assessment Centre’s community outreach, effective Monday, April 20th, the Centre will be open for virtual screening (by telephone) between 8AM and 4PM, Monday to Friday, and from 10AM to 2PM Saturdays and Sundays. Appointments will be pre-booked following the virtual screening assessment for those who require physical assessment at the Centre. **In the event that symptoms are severe, call 911 and alert the dispatcher to the potential concern regarding COVID-19 so they can be appropriately prepared.**

What to expect when visiting the NHH COVID-19 Assessment Centre

Patients who are directed to present to the Centre for physical assessment will be asked to wash their hands and answer a series of pre-screening questions immediately inside the entrance of the hospital prior to visiting the Centre. Temperature will be taken and those wearing latex gloves will be required to remove them prior to entry to ensure completion of hand hygiene. All patients coming into the hospital will be asked to don a mask. Visitors are not permitted to join, only the individual requiring assessment. Hospital staff within the Assessment Centre will complete the screening process, and administer the test (if deemed clinically appropriate). The test consists of a swab, inserted into the throat and nasal passage. It is not painful, but many report that it is briefly uncomfortable. Following the test patients are directed on next steps as required.

How are results shared, and how long does it take?

All swabs processed by the NHH Centre and Northumberland Paramedics are sent for processing in a regional lab. Results are typically available within 24 to 72 hours and will be communicated directly to the patient, through either the local Public Health unit, the province’s online result portal or the patient’s primary care physician.

Related quotes

“NHH is committed to supporting the province’s call to expand COVID-19 testing,” said Linda Davis, NHH President and CEO. “The collaboration with our community partner to support vulnerable populations within our community is most appreciated and we look forward to working together with Public Health to minimize the spread of COVID-19 in Northumberland.”

“Northumberland Paramedics is proud to partner with our colleagues at NHH to further enhance local assessment and testing for COVID-19,” adds Northumberland Paramedics Chief Bill Detlor. “Taking this service into the community, to our long-term care homes and other vulnerable populations, is consistent with public health direction for people to stay put; it is another important step local health system partners are taking to meet the needs of residents and to limit the potential for spread of COVID-19.”

For the most recent provincial information on COVID-19, including symptoms to watch for and a link to the online self-assessment tool, see Ontario’s dedicated COVID website: <https://www.ontario.ca/page/2019-novel-coronavirus>. Information on local cases is updated regularly on the local Public Health website at <https://www.hkpr.on.ca/>. Links to these and other local resources will be found on NHH’s dedicated COVID-19 page: <https://nhh.ca/covid-19> and the County website Northumberland.ca/COVID19.

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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 Alnwick/Haldimand. NHH employs approximately 600 people and relies on the additional support provided by physicians and volunteers. NHH is an active member of 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).

About Northumberland Paramedics - Northumberland Paramedics provides emergency response and community paramedicine services for Northumberland County. Working from six stations strategically located throughout the county, a team of over 100 paramedics responds to over 25,000 calls annually. Northumberland paramedics are committed to delivering industry-leading pre-hospital care, illness prevention and health promotion services and collaborating with system partners to improve health outcomes across our community. For more information, visit Northumberland.ca/paramedics.

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