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To / Destinataire RHA / RRS (Horizon, Vitalité); ANB/EMP / ANB/PEM; NB Medical Society / Société médicale du N.-B.; First Nations / Premières Nations; NB Pharmacists' Association / Association des pharmaciens du N.-B.; Nurses Association of NB / Association des infirmières et infirmiers du N.-B.; NB College of Pharmacists / Ordre des pharmaciens du N.-B; Provincial correctional facilities / Établissements correctionnels provinciaux; Social Development / Développement social; Group homes: Shelters – homeless persons, women, other vulnerable persons / Foyers de groupe : refuges – les sans-abri, les femmes et autres personnes vulnérables; EECD – Early Learning and Childcare Facilities / EDPE – Établissements de garderie éducative

From / Expédition Dr. / D^{re} Cristin Muecke, Deputy Medical Officer of Health / Médecin-hygiéniste en chef adjointe

Copies RMOHs / MHR; Dr. / D^{re} Russell; Heidi Liston; Éric Levesque; Shelley Landsburg; Penny Higdon; Jeff McCarthy

Subject / Objet **COVID-19 testing and sentinel surveillance / Dépistage et surveillance sentinelle de la COVID-19**

As the COVID-19 pandemic evolves, appropriate and effective testing is an integral component of New Brunswick's strategy to protect the health of the population.

Currently the prevalence of COVID-19 remains low in New Brunswick and testing continues to be prioritized for symptomatic individuals. In an effort to identify as many cases as possible and to maintain a testing threshold across the province, testing is recommended for individuals presenting even with mild symptoms or one symptom.

In addition, testing is also being offered to several high-risk groups including all contacts of a confirmed case of COVID-19, temporary foreign workers and international high school and post-secondary students arriving in the province.

As a next step, targeted and sentinel surveillance will be enhanced to maintain testing numbers and

Alors que la pandémie de COVID-19 évolue, des tests de dépistage appropriés et efficaces font partie intégrante de la stratégie du Nouveau-Brunswick pour protéger la santé de la population.

La prévalence actuelle de la COVID-19 au Nouveau-Brunswick demeure faible et le dépistage chez les personnes symptomatiques demeure prioritaire. Afin de diagnostiquer le plus de cas possible et pour assurer le maintien d'un seuil de tests réalisés dans la province, les tests de dépistage sont recommandés pour les personnes présentant seulement des symptômes bénins, voire un seul symptôme.

De plus, les tests de dépistage sont également offerts à plusieurs groupes à haut risque, notamment, tous les contacts d'un cas confirmé de la COVID-19, les travailleurs étrangers temporaires et les élèves internationaux du niveau secondaire et les étudiants postsecondaires étrangers qui arrivent au Nouveau-Brunswick.

Comme prochaine étape, la surveillance sentinelle ciblée sera accrue afin de maintenir le nombre de

facilitate early detection. Testing will be available to various groups, including asymptomatic long-term care facility (nursing home and adult residential facility) staff, First Nations community health centre staff, provincial correctional facilities staff and homeless shelter staff and volunteers.

Asymptomatic emergency room patients will also be eligible for testing up to a maximum of 5 people per day per emergency room.

Health care workers and first responders (fire, ambulance, police) continue to be prioritized for testing if symptomatic *at all* (for example, headache) but are not a targeted group for asymptomatic testing.

More information on New Brunswick's COVID-19 testing strategy is attached. (Infographic and Q & A)

Thank you for your continued collaboration and support as we face this unprecedented situation together.

tests réalisés et de faciliter le dépistage précoce. Les tests de dépistage seront également offerts à divers groupes, notamment, les membres du personnel suivants : d'établissements de soins de longue durée (foyers de soins et établissements résidentiels pour adultes) asymptomatiques; des centres de santé communautaire des Premières Nations; des établissements correctionnels provinciaux; des refuges pour itinérants ainsi que les bénévoles.

Les patients des salles d'urgence asymptomatiques seront admissibles au test de dépistage, jusqu'à un maximum de cinq personnes par jour par salle d'urgence.

La priorité concernant les tests de dépistage continue d'être accordée aux travailleurs de la santé et aux premiers intervenants (pompiers, ambulanciers paramédicaux, agents de police) s'ils présentent un symptôme *quelconque* (par exemple, mal de tête), mais ils ne constituent pas un groupe cible pour les tests chez les personnes asymptomatiques.

Vous trouverez ci-joint de plus amples renseignements sur la stratégie de dépistage de la COVID-19 du Nouveau-Brunswick. (Infographie et document de questions et réponses)

Nous vous remercions de votre collaboration et de votre appui soutenus alors que nous faisons face à cette situation inédite ensemble.



Cristin Muecke, MD, MSc, FRCPC
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Testing Strategy for Targeted Asymptomatic People: Questions and Answers

Who has access to testing via the assessment centers when asymptomatic?

There are certain groups that work with vulnerable populations that are eligible to be tested when asymptomatic. This includes:

- Long Term Care facilities staff
- Adult Residential facilities staff
- Provincial corrections staff
- First Nations community health centre staff
- Homeless shelter staff and volunteers
- Daycare workers
- School personnel
- Long haul truckers

*Other asymptomatic targeted groups on the infographic will be directly contacted with specific arrangements for testing

When is testing available?

Asymptomatic testing can be accessed starting September 8, 2020. Prior to September 8, you can be tested if you have 1 or more symptom by calling 811. Testing can be arranged every two weeks when asymptomatic. Recurring appointments may be arranged at the assessment center when you go to be tested.

*If you develop one or more **symptoms** of COVID-19 you should still call 811 to arrange for testing regardless of this initiative.

What is the process for accessing asymptomatic testing?

If eligible asymptomatic personnel are concerned about potential exposure to the virus and would like to be tested for COVID-19, they would call **1-833-475-0724** to arrange to be tested. A process for on line booking of appointments is under development and will be communicated when ready to go.

When should eligible personnel be tested if they are concerned about potential exposure to the virus?

The average time in which a test would become positive after an exposure is around 5 days. Testing sooner may not result in a positive test, even if you have been infected. Consider this timing when arranging a test and self-monitor for symptoms. If you were a close contact of a confirmed positive case, regional public health office will contact you with directions on when to be tested.

How often can I have a test?

Those eligible are able to schedule a test every two weeks. If however you develop symptoms you should seek testing as soon as possible.

If you are concerned about a potential exposure, should you self-isolate until you can receive a test?

Being concerned about a potential exposure does not require self-isolation. If public health determines that you meet the definition of a 'close contact' of a confirmed case, you will be contacted directly and given instructions about testing and isolation.

Do I need to self isolate while waiting for my test results?

If you were asymptomatic or only had 1 symptom when tested, you are not required to self-isolate while waiting for the results. If you have 2 or more symptoms when tested, you are required to self-isolate until you receive your results.

Is my family required to self isolate if I am either symptomatic or waiting for test results?

No, your household members are not required to self isolate while waiting for test results unless you have been advised to do so by Public Health or you have returned from travel in the past 14 days from outside the Atlantic bubble.

How do I retrieve test results?

Upon testing, individuals are provided with a registration code. You may register for a MyHealthNB account to check your own results online at myhealth.qnb.ca. You only need to register for a MyHealthNB account once. Should you be tested on multiple occasions, you would use the same account each time.

What do I need to know about a negative COVID-19 test result?

Negative results indicate that, at the time of your test, the virus was not present in your nose or throat in detectable amounts. This may be the case very early on after an exposure. It is important to remember that your test result is for that point in time only. It doesn't tell you if you have had COVID-19 before, and it doesn't predict if you will get it in the future.

What will happen if I test positive for COVID-19?

If you test positive for COVID-19, the regional public health office will contact you directly. You will be asked for information to help determine who you were in contact with while you may have been contagious or where you may have acquired COVID-19. They will also advise you about requirements for self-isolation.