

## HALTON REGION PUBLIC HEALTH • Office of the Medical Officer of Health

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TO: Halton Physicians, Nurse Practitioners, Emergency Departments, other Healthcare Providers

FROM: Dr. Deepika Lobo, Associate Medical Officer of Health

DATE: April 14, 2023

RE: New Ontario Guidelines for Providers Offering HIV Testing (2023)

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### QUICK FACTS

- The new [Ontario Guidelines for Providers Offering HIV Testing](#) (attached) provides comprehensive guidance on HIV testing including recognizing acute symptoms and chronic conditions associated with HIV infection, identifying high-risk individuals for HIV testing, assessing for post-exposure-prophylaxis (PEP) treatment, recommended testing timelines, and resources for counseling

### KEY MESSAGES FOR HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS

- The window period for HIV infection is three months and that is still the case with HIV POC (Point of Care) tests and self-tests. However, the window period for **laboratory-based HIV diagnostic serology testing has been reduced to 6 weeks.**
- To confirm or rule out an HIV infection, offer laboratory-based HIV diagnostic serology testing:
  - At baseline and, if negative,
  - At 3 weeks after the exposure and, if negative,
  - At 6 weeks after the exposure (3-6 testing).
- Individuals who are tested **using only POC testing or a self-test** (i.e. no laboratory-based diagnostic serology testing), should be tested at baseline and at 3 weeks, 6 weeks and 3 months (3-6-3 testing) after the exposure, to definitively rule out HIV infection.
- If the person being tested is within 72 hours of high-risk exposure, assess for PEP treatment (refer to the algorithm on Page 12 of the guideline).
- Behaviours associated with HIV infection are often stigmatized; if an individual requests testing, testing is appropriate. If the person is a frequent tester with no evidence of risk, offer support and referral in accordance with the [Counselling Guidelines for Clients with High HIV Anxiety and Low/No Risk](#).

### ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- [HIV Testing Ontario](#) website
- Public Health Ontario [Human Immunodeficiency Virus](#) (HIV)

Please report all suspected/confirmed cases of [Diseases of Public Health Significance](#) (only report COVID-19 cases occurring in high-risk settings) to Public Health immediately by calling 311, 905-825-6000 or toll free at 1-866-442-5866.

PLEASE PROVIDE A COPY TO ALL PHYSICIANS IN YOUR OFFICE AND/OR POST IN EMERGENCY DEPARTMENTS AND PHYSICIAN LOUNGES. IF YOU HAVE ANY ISSUES WITH THIS ATTACHMENT, PLEASE EMAIL [DOCTORS@HALTON.CA](mailto:DOCTORS@HALTON.CA).