

Date:	January 26, 2021
To:	NH Medical Staff and NH Clinical Staff
CC:	Chief Operating Officers and Medical Directors
From:	Northern Health Medical Health Officers
Re:	Repeat testing when new symptoms arise in the context of a previous positive COVID-19 test

Although there is no official Provincial guidance on this topic, Provincial consensus among Medical Health Officers and supported by Provincial Health Officer Dr. Bonnie Henry is that it is not useful to re-test someone with new COVID-19-like symptoms within two months of the original positive COVID-19 test.

Re-infection rates in the two months following an infection are extremely low, and shedding of non-infectious viral particles frequently persists for weeks to months following the original infection. A repeat positive test result almost certainly represents this prolonged post-infectious shedding, and not a new COVID-19 infection.

If new symptoms arise within the two months following a COVID-19 infection, decisions regarding isolation in hospitals or elsewhere should be based on symptom profile, clinical judgement, and usual infection control guidelines for other communicable diseases, and not based on a COVID-19 test.