

COVID-19 assessment centres opening this week

Southlake Regional Health Centre will open one of three York Region-based COVID-19 assessment centres this week, according to the Region of York.

Southlake's clinic will serve alongside similar clinics at Richmond Hill's Mackenzie Health and Markham-Stouffville Hospital in helping patients experiencing COVID-19 symptoms get diagnosed, thus reducing the impact on emergency rooms, physicians and the community.

COVID-19 assessment centres help ease some of the pressures experienced by emergency department teams coordinating the testing and assessment of suspected COVID-19 cases to date, says the Region of York. They will also help ensure local hospital emergency departments are focused on treating people who are critically ill and have life-threatening illnesses or injuries.

You can attend a COVID-19 assessment centre if you are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 and you have:

- Recently returned from travel outside Canada within the last 14 days-
- Been in close contact with someone who is a presumptive or confirmed case of COVID-19-
- Been in close contact with someone who has flu-like symptoms who has travelled outside Canada in the last 14 days

Symptoms of COVID-19 include a fever (over 38 degrees Celsius or 100 degrees Fahrenheit) combined with a new or worsening cough and-or new or worsening shortness of breath.

If you have concerns about symptoms, you should contact your primary care provider or call Telehealth Ontario at 1-866-797-0000, available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Each York Region hospital will manage their assessment centre based on their operational capacity.

Not all people who attend a COVID-19 assessment centre will be tested for COVID-19, says the Region. The role of an assessment centre is to evaluate the need of each individual and triage patients accordingly. Each assessment centre will be managed by hospital staff and located in close proximity to an emergency department in case any patients being assessed require urgent care. If a patient is determined to be ill but not requiring hospitalization, self-isolation or monitoring at home may be required.

York Region Public Health continues to collaborate with local hospitals, emergency services and other health agencies to ensure prompt reporting and follow up of all individuals who may require testing for COVID-19. Patients who test positive for COVID-19 will be contacted by York Region Public Health for follow up and monitoring. Patients with negative test results will also be notified by York Region Public Health.