

Patient updates

April 14, 2022

Dear patients,

We are writing to share updates about:

- Our clinic hours for this upcoming weekend
- New medications to treat COVID-19

Clinic Hours Friday, April 15 – Monday, April 18

Our clinics will be closed on Friday, April 15 to observe Good Friday. If you have an urgent care issue at this time, call the office and listen to the voice prompts to be connected to hospital locating. Once connected, ask for the family medicine resident on call.

Our weekend urgent care clinics will continue on Saturday, April 16 and Sunday, April 17 as regularly scheduled.

On Monday, April 18 our clinics will be closed to observe Easter Monday. We will have an urgent care clinic that will operate out of our Wellesley - St. James Town Health Centre at 95 Homewood Ave. The hours will be 9 a.m. – noon and 1 p.m. - 4 p.m.

Please call prior to walking in on the weekend. This allows us to manage the volume of people in clinic at one time. For more information about our Urgent Care Clinics and after hour's phone information, view our [website](#).

New medications to treat COVID-19

There are several medications that can be used to treat COVID-19, including Paxlovid (Nirmatrelvir /Ritonavir).

Paxlovid is a new anti-viral medication that stops the virus from replicating and has been found to reduce the risk of hospitalization and death when given within 5 days of their first symptoms.

There is now plenty of Paxlovid supply in Ontario. Family physicians and nurse practitioners on our team can prescribe the drug and it can be picked up at [many community pharmacies in the province](#).

Please call us right away to see if you may benefit from this drug if you have symptoms of COVID-19 and one of the following applies:

- you have a weakened immune system
- you are over 60 years old
- you are unvaccinated or have only had 1 or 2 doses of a COVID vaccine
- you are pregnant and have not had any doses of the COVID vaccine
- you have other health risks including diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease, lung disease, kidney disease, liver disease, obesity, cerebral palsy, intellectual disability, or sickle cell disease

It is important that you call right away as Paxlovid is only helpful if you take it within 5 days of your symptoms starting. To receive Paxlovid, we will need to confirm you have COVID using either a PCR or Rapid Antigen Test (RAT). There is no cost for the medication and a health card is not required.

In addition to getting the medication at our clinics, you can access these medications by visiting a COVID clinical [assessment centre near you](#).

If you are in a high-risk category, you should try and have a small supply of Rapid Antigen Test (RATs) at home. We have RAT kits at our clinics and you do not need to call or make an appointment to pick up a kit. You can walk in and pick a kit from our screeners or get a RAT kit from a [location close to home](#).

To learn more about treatments available for COVID-19 and other helpful information see below:

- [If I get COVID, is there a medication I can take?](#)
- [Are COVID-19 Treatments Right For You?](#)
- [Learn about Paxlovid](#)
- [Use this tool](#) to find out if you are at higher risk of severe COVID-19 and may benefit from these treatments

For up-to-date information on managing COVID-19 including how long to isolate for, what to do if you are a close contact, when to call your doctor and more, please visit [ConfusedAbouttCOVID.ca](#).

Remember, vaccinations continue to be the best defense in protecting against severe disease and hospitalization. We strongly recommend that all adults receive a minimum of 3 vaccine doses and children age 5 to 11 receive a minimum of 2 doses.

As we continue to navigate this 6th wave, we strongly recommend wearing masks in public places, avoiding closed, crowded spaces, frequent hand washing, and staying home when you are sick. Please reach out to our clinics if you have health questions or concerns. We are here to help and support.

Take care and be well,
SMHAFHT Leadership Team