

# Emergency and Patient Intake

## Protecting Yourself and Others

- Continue to follow all safe work procedures. If it is unsafe to work, talk to your supervisor, health and safety committee or representative, and/or union.
- Stay home if you are sick or might be sick. Follow the Public Health Agency of Canada's steps for self-assessment: <https://www.canada.ca/coronavirus>
- Wear required personal protective equipment and follow routine precautions. Do not touch your face.
- Wash your hands at the start of your shift, before eating or drinking, after touching shared items, after using the washroom, and at the end of your shift. Remove jewellery while washing.
- Do not share communication devices, personal protective equipment, cigarettes or vaping equipment.

## Facility Management

- Increase ventilation rates and fresh air return where possible.
- Only allow essential visitors. Screen all visitors before they enter.
- Install physical barriers such as clear plastic sneeze guards, glass or plastic windows, and curtains between patients.
- Post signs to remind patients to alert a healthcare worker immediately if they experience any symptoms.
- Consider a separate area or entrance for those needing a respiratory virus evaluation.
- Provide tissues and alcohol-based hand sanitizer at entrances.
- Be aware of cross-contamination through staff, equipment (stretchers, wheelchairs, stethoscopes, blood pressure cuffs), patient belongings, patient records, linens, clothes, and surfaces such as counters, chairs, handles, and doorknobs.
- Clean shared equipment, phones, tablets, etc. with alcohol or disinfectant wipes.
- Make sure workers are trained to work safely before replacing the duties of others.
- Postpone elective procedures, surgeries and non-urgent outpatient appointments.

## Early Recognition

- Use routine practices and follow contact and droplet precautions.
- Triage for risk factors as soon as possible.
- Check for risk factors associated with COVID-19, such as fever, acute respiratory illness or new/worsening cough; travel outside Canada; or direct contact with someone who has travelled or has been suspected of having COVID-19.



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## If a Person is Suspected of Having COVID-19

- Place the patient in a designated separate waiting area or space.
- Encourage any patient with signs and symptoms of an acute respiratory infection to cough in their elbow. Provide tissues, alcohol-based hand sanitizer, and a plastic lined waste container.
- Do not group with other patients unless necessary, and then only group with confirmed COVID-19 patients.

## Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

- Train workers on how to work with and care for personal protective equipment, and to understand its limitations.
- Put on and remove PPE in the correct order according to safe work procedures to reduce exposure.
- Use all of the following PPE measures:
  - Gloves
  - A long-sleeved gown
  - Face protection, such as surgical/procedural mask and eye protection, face shield, or surgical/procedural mask with visor attachment
  - An N95 respirator (plus eye protection) should be used when performing aerosol-generating medical procedures
- Reusable respirators, including powered air purifying respirators (PAPRs), must be cleaned and disinfected according to the manufacturer's instructions before re-use.
- Consider having all staff wear a surgical/procedural mask at all times, and if in contact with a positive or suspected COVID-19 patient, use an N95 respirator.
- Make sure workers who are required to wear an N95 respirator are fit-tested to a minimum of 2 styles should PPE availability be challenged.
- Be aware of PPE breaches (including breaches between respirator and face). Change N95 respirators ideally when it becomes difficult to breathe or when the respirator becomes too wet, moist or soiled.
- Hand hygiene should be performed as needed, especially during and after removal of PPE, and after leaving the patient care area.
- If there are shortages, PPE should be prioritized for aerosol-generating procedures, care activities where splashes and sprays are anticipated, and high-contact patient care activities. Consider if continuous wear of the same PPE is appropriate when working with patients with the same diagnosis.
- Improvised or home-made masks are not PPE. Caution should be used. Discuss options with your supervisor, and/or your health and safety committee or representative, and/or union if present.

**Provide mental health support to all workers, including access to an employee assistance program (EAP) if available.**



**For further information on COVID-19, refer to the Public Health Agency of Canada**

<https://www.canada.ca/coronavirus>

**Note that this guidance is just some of the adjustments organizations can make during a pandemic. Adapt this list by adding your own good practices and policies to meet your organization's specific needs.**