

# Clinical Response Guidelines for COVID-19 in an outpatient setting (primary care clinics, private medical offices, urgent and primary care centres, and Northern Health clinics)

For patient presentation to Emergency Department, use the ED ALGORITHM

## SCREENING at RECEPTION

### Screening Criteria for All Patients:

Patients with compatible symptoms (e.g. fever, cough, difficulty breathing)  
And

Travel within 14 days of symptom onset to [an affected area](#)

Or

Close contact with a confirmed or probable case of COVID-19 or other index of suspicion (e.g. contact with an ill person with such travel history)

### Positive Screen

1. Screening staff/clinician to don gloves, surgical mask and eye protection (goggles/face shield)
2. Have patient don a surgical mask and use hand sanitizer
3. Immediately inform patient of requirements for contact and droplet (isolation) precautions

### Negative Screen

Low risk of COVID-19:  
Continue routine assessment & universal precautions

1. Screening staff/clinician escorts patient to designated assessment room (no shared room if possible or arrange a phone call or transfer)<sup>a</sup>
2. Place patient on Contact/Droplet precautions (*post signage on door*)
3. Test for COVID-19
4. All equipment brought into patient room must remain in room until cleaned<sup>a</sup>
5. Use N95 mask for all aerosol-generating procedures (*see additional precautions*)

### Discharge Patient Home with Instructions

1. Ensure patient receives Handout '**Information About Novel Coronavirus for Patients Tested and/or Cared For In Community**'<sup>d</sup>
2. Upon discharge home, escort patient through alternate route where available; not through the waiting area, if possible.

### Patient Requires Higher Level of Care

1. Contact the Emergency Department to provide pre-notification of suspected or known COVID-19 patient's arrival
2. Inform patient to present to the Emergency Department Triage Desk and **not** the waiting room
3. If urgent care required call '911' to arrange transport to Emergency Department: State "**Suspected COVID-19 (Coronavirus)**"

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## SCREENING & ASSESSMENT

- **Display posters at entrances** with instructions for patients with respiratory symptoms to identify themselves immediately to staff/reception (*'Facility Entry Reception Poster' on OurNH*)
- **Screen ALL patients** presenting to outpatient setting (primary care settings) for COVID-19 using screening criteria
- Wherever possible have **Designated Route of Movement** for positive screened patient to designated assessment area (i.e. reception to assessment room, assessment room to outside; ensure movement route is clear of people and equipment prior to moving patient)
- <sup>d</sup> Ensure Handout given to patient – *'Information About Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) for Patients Being Tested and/or Cared For In Community'* – available on **OurNH** under 'Novel Coronavirus'

## ISOLATION

- Immediately upon positive screening and where possible, place patient in **Designated Assessment Area** (see below for specifics)<sup>a</sup> **GOAL: Rapid Isolation of Patient To Reduce Risk of Transmission**
  - 2 meters separation between patients
  - Minimize patient movement; and traffic/visitors into patient room

## DESIGNATED ASSESSMENT AREA <sup>a</sup>

- For **Designated Assessment Room:**
  - Single-bed, closed room with dedicated washroom, if possible; closed door to hallway
    - If no single-room option, apply a 2-metre separation between beds with privacy curtains closed; do not share items between patients
  - If possible use room with 100% cleanable surfaces only (i.e. no carpet, etc.)
  - Remove all non-essential equipment and furniture from rooms to minimize contamination
  - Stethoscopes and other frequently used equipment to be left in designated room
  - Chart, pens and wireless phones must stay in room until disinfected
  - Any equipment removed from room must be disinfected using a hospital-approved disinfectant
  - Room to be immediately cleaned upon patient discharge

## TESTING AND LABORATORY <sup>c</sup>

- Collect either a Nasopharyngeal **or** Throat swab (Nasopharyngeal preferred sample collection):
  - Add "COVID-19" to **ALL** Lab Requisitions (alerts Lab staff to use additional PPE when handling samples)
- For clinic staff performing Point of Care Testing (i.e. urinalysis and/or blood glucose), ensure gloves, masks, and eye protection (goggles/face shield) donned

## ADDITIONAL PRECAUTIONS

- Universal precautions including scrupulous hand washing before and after patient contact putting on and taking off mask, etc.
- **Have alcohol-based hand rubs (60-90% alcohol) readily available at clinic reception, waiting room, and in assessment areas**
- **Increase frequency of cleaning of high-touch areas with routine cleaning products (i.e. reception area, assessment rooms, etc.)**
  - Additional precautions including N95 mask with eye protection must be worn during aerosol-generating procedures (i.e. open suctioning of respiratory tract, intubation, bronchoscopy, CPR):
  - Avoid BIPAP (Bi-level Positive Airway Pressure) therapy
  - Administer O<sub>2</sub> without humidification

## RESOURCES

- For questions, contact Communicable Disease Team: 1-855-565-2990 or [CentralCDHUB@northernhealth.ca](mailto:CentralCDHUB@northernhealth.ca) from 8:30 am to 4:30 pm Monday to Friday. After hours, NH MHO on-call 250-565-2000, press 7 for Switchboard
- If suspected Health Care Worker exposure, call Provincial Workplace Centre at 1-866-922-9464
- Contact your Infection Control Professional as needed

### Resources available on OurNH under 'Novel Coronavirus'

Please contact Northern Health Communications Advisor, Bailee Denicola at [Bailee.Denicola@northernhealth.ca](mailto:Bailee.Denicola@northernhealth.ca) if you require signage, patient information handouts, or other resources found on OurNH.