

# Your Return to Practice Playbook

## Treating High-risk patients

The purpose of the following operational requirements, as outlined by the Ministry of Health, is to support physical distancing and minimize the contact of persons who may have COVID-19 with health care settings as much as possible. The Ministry of Health recommends patients and essential visitors should be actively screened by phone for symptoms of COVID-19 prior to coming to the clinic for an appointment; they should then be screened upon arrival to the clinic.

This can be completed with the [screening tool](#) provided. Also, please refer to the [Reporting Potential Cases of COVID-19](#) document for more information.

Please remind patients to wear a face covering (cloth face coverings are acceptable) for appointments where physical distancing of 2 metres can't be maintained. If a patient is unable to wear a face covering (e.g. due to a health condition or difficulty breathing), please use your professional judgement to assess the risk of providing examination or treatment to that patient. If a patient enters the clinic and does not have a mask, you are required to provide one.

If a patient or essential visitor screens positive, the appointment should be deferred if possible and the individual referred to:

- ⇒ Primary care physician
- ⇒ Telehealth: 1-866-787-0000
- ⇒ [Self-Assessment Tool](#)
- ⇒ [Assessment Centre](#) or [local public health unit](#) for further testing

You may offer care to a patient who screens positive or is COVID-19 positive **only if** you are able to follow **appropriate droplet/contact precautions** and are knowledgeable on [donning](#) and [doffing PPE](#).

Please be sure to record contacts for symptomatic patients (within their patient record) – and ask all visitors and guests to fill out the [contact registry](#).

- 1) Perform hand hygiene and don appropriate PPE:
  - surgical/procedure mask
  - isolation gown
  - gloves
  - eye protection (e.g. goggles or face shield)
- 2) Advise the patient to wash their hands and provide them with a surgical/procedure mask (a non-medical mask is not sufficient)
- 3) Place the patient in a separate area of the clinic or advise patient to wait outside in the parking lot or in their vehicle (if possible)

- 4) Following the appointment, provide the patient with hand sanitizer or advise them to wash their hands and safely dispose of used tissues and masks
- 5) Perform appropriate cleaning protocols, remember to use the wipe-twice method
- 6) Appropriately doff PPE and perform hand hygiene

If you are not able to provide care, it should be diverted as appropriate:

- ⇒ To the emergency department if the reason for the medical visit is urgent
- ⇒ To an assessment centre for testing if the appointment can be deferred

If a visitor screens positive:

- ⇒ They should be referred for further assessment and testing to an assessment centre, telehealth, primary care provider, or to the [self-assessment tool](#)
- ⇒ They should not be permitted to attend with the patient, pending test results
- ⇒ Where possible, services should be deferred until symptoms have resolved
- ⇒ To reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19, visitors should be limited to those who are essential; those who qualify as essential are determined by the health care provider(s) in your clinic based on the needs and demographics of patients

Please keep in mind:

- ⇒ PPE controls are the last tier in the hierarchy of hazard controls and should not be relied on as a stand-alone primary prevention program
- ⇒ If you are caring for a patient who screens or tests positive for COVID-19, **all** droplet/contact precautions must be taken, including all the PPE listed in this document
- ⇒ A surgical/procedure mask must be worn by a health care provider while providing care to a patient who screens negative, and eye protection should be considered
- ⇒ In exceptional cases where a home visit is required, full droplet/contact precautions (see above) must be taken
- ⇒ Always practice hand hygiene before and after interaction with any patient, interaction with the patient environment, exiting and entering the clinic, the use of any equipment, cleaning and disinfection protocols and donning and doffing PPE