



# IPAC GUIDANCE FOR COMMUNITY PRACTICES DURING COVID-19

APRIL 2022

With most COVID-19 public health measures lifted in Ontario, control measures in your practice continue to be key to reducing transmission and keeping patients, staff, and yourself safe, and meeting clinical needs.

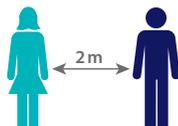
Outlined below are pandemic-related measures for infection prevention and control, including **screening, masking, PPE, physical distancing, cleaning, and ventilation.**

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| <br><b>Screening</b> | <p><b>Active Screening</b></p> <p>Screen patients and anyone who accompanies them, both when scheduling appointment and at clinic/ office entrance.</p> <p><u>OCFP tool</u> to screen for COVID symptoms and exposure risk.</p>  | <p><b>Passive Screening</b></p> <p>Passive screening is not required but signage posted at office/ clinic and building entrance, asking staff, patients and visitors to self-identify if ill, may augment active screening.</p> | <p><b>Staff Screening</b></p> <p>All staff to self-monitor for symptoms of COVID.</p> |
|  | <p>A negative COVID test and/or proof of vaccination are not required for an in-person patient visit. Consider scheduling “screen positive” patients during dedicated clinic hours i.e., at the beginning or end of the day.</p> |   |   |

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| <br><b>Masking</b> | <p><b>Universal Masking</b></p> <p>At this time, masks continue to be <b>required</b> for patients and staff in <b>all healthcare settings</b>, including community-based practices. More information below on masks as part of <b>PPE</b>.</p> <p><b>Resources:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PHO factsheet: <a href="#">Universal Mask Use in Health Care</a></li> <li>• OCFP’s <a href="#">printable office sign</a> to remind patients to keep their masks on at all times</li> </ul> |   |  |
|   | <p><b>For “Screen positive” patient and any accompanying caregiver</b></p> <p>Provide a medical mask or non-fit tested N95 respirator.</p>   | <p><b>If patient refuses or is unable to wear a mask</b></p> <p>Take measures to protect other patients and staff, i.e., move directly to exam room, seat in a separate area distanced from others, or schedule during specific times. See CPSO’s <a href="#">COVID-19 FAQs for Physicians</a>.</p> <p><b>Resource:</b> Printable <a href="#">clinic sign</a> reminds patients that abusive behaviour is unacceptable</p> |  |



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|  <p><b>PPE:<br/>clinic staff  <br/>healthcare<br/>team</b></p> | <p><b>Direct care/within 2 metres of confirmed or “screen positive” patient</b></p> <p>Fit-tested, seal-checked <a href="#">N95 respirator</a> or equivalent (non-fit tested N95, KN95 or well-fitting medical mask), isolation gown, gloves and eye protection (goggles, face shield or safety glasses with side protection)</p> <p>Change/discard PPE between patients; hand hygiene between patients.</p>   | <p><b>All other patient interactions   care of patients who screen negative</b></p> <p>Well-fitting medical mask or N95 respirator; if patient is unmasked, also wear eye protection.</p> <p>Hand hygiene between patients.</p> | <p><b>Staff receiving patients/ conducting screening</b></p> <p>If can maintain physical distance of at least 2 metres or have an impermeable barrier (such as plexiglass): medical mask or fit-tested N95 respirator or equivalent</p> <p>If not: fit-tested N95 respirator or well-fitted medical mask or non-fit tested respirator or equivalent, and eye protection; if direct physical contact, also wear isolation gown and gloves.</p> <p>Hand hygiene after physical contact or contact with shared equipment, i.e. pens, clipboards.</p> |
|   | <p><b>Tips:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PPE allocations, including N95s, are available from the <a href="#">provincial pandemic stockpile</a>.</li> <li>• Steps can be taken to safely extend the use and/or re-use your N95 respirator. If a respirator must be re-used, keep it from being contaminated by carefully storing it in a clean paper bag, or in a cleanable container with a lid. Wash your hands before and after handling your mask.</li> </ul> |   |   |
|   | <p><b>Resources:</b> <a href="#">Poster: PPE in community practice – OMA</a> (gated access)</p> <p><b>Summary:</b> <a href="#">PPE Selection for Suspect or Confirmed COVID-19 – PHO</a></p>   |   |   |

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|  <p><b>Physical distancing  <br/>Office flow</b></p> | <p><b>General</b></p> <p>While not required, physical distancing where possible is still recommended.</p> <p>Minimize time patients spend in the waiting room, and non-essential items in patient areas.</p> | <p><b>Confirmed or “screen positive” patient</b></p> <p>Move patient to exam room immediately or to separate area away from others; if not possible, distance by 2 metres or more from other patients. See above for masking step.</p> <p>Continue scheduling symptomatic patients separately, where possible, at beginning or end of day.</p> | <p><b>Staff</b></p> <p>As much as possible, schedule staff breaks to avoid crowded eating rooms and other staff areas.</p> <p>If more than one staff in break room, masks should be removed for as little time as possible, as required for eating and drinking.</p> |
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| <br><b>Cleaning</b>   | <b>Confirmed or “screen positive” patient</b>   | <b>Patients who screen negative</b>   |
|  | <p>Clean and disinfect within 2 metres of patient as soon as possible, and clean and disinfect treatment areas, horizontal surfaces and equipment before another patient is brought into area or used on another patient.</p> | <p>Use <a href="#">standard cleaning processes</a> (i.e., as would normally be done pre-pandemic for IPAC).</p> |
| <p>PHO’s <a href="#">Interim Guidance for Infection Prevention and Control of SARS-CoV-2 Variants of Concern for Health Care Settings</a>.</p> |   |   |

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| <br><b>Ventilation</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure ventilation system is functioning properly and optimized. If needed, request report from the building owner/landlord.</li> <li>• Keep doors and windows open if possible.</li> <li>• Consider an air cleaner with a HEPA (high-efficiency particulate air) filter if HVAC is very poor or non-existent, or there is no outdoor air exchange. Select a portable air cleaner with clean air delivery rate (CADR) large enough for the size of the room or area.</li> </ul> <p><b>Resources:</b> <a href="#">Five elements of an air quality check</a> (Dr. Jeya Nadarajah), <a href="#">Public Health Ontario HVAC guide</a> (not specific to health care); <a href="#">FAQs on portable air cleaners</a>; CDC’s <a href="#">strategies and tools for improving building ventilation</a> in the context of virus transmission.</p> |
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