



As Ontario opens up, we know that family practices should now have sufficient personal protective equipment (PPE) and experience with IPAC protocols to conduct routine and necessary in-office assessments. Working with your patients, you can determine when an in-person visit is needed, or whether a virtual visit will suffice.

Before every patient interaction, conduct [screening](#) and consider whether you can best serve your patient's need with an [in-person or virtual visit](#). See the visual guide below for tips on PPE use and environmental cleaning for the clinical setting.



Staying safe when providing in-person care:

- 1 All patients should wear a **mask*** (may bring their own mask to the clinic).
- 2 Conduct 20-second **hand hygiene** (either soap/water or hand sanitizer) before and after all patient interactions, and after removal of PPE.
- 3 You can re-use your **procedure mask** until soiled, wet, crumpled or no longer fits properly. Store in a breathable container between uses (a paper bag is reasonable). N95 masks are not required for in-clinic use as no aerosol generating procedures are performed.
- 4 PPE use is required for **all interactions within 2 metres** of patients. For patients who screen positive for COVID-19 in office, take Droplet and Contact precautions. (*surgical/procedure mask; isolation gown; gloves; eye protection*)
- 5 **Goggles or face shield** are required for patients who screen positive and for those who screen negative only if they are unmasked. Goggles or face shield should be cleaned after seeing a patient who screens positive and you suspect may have COVID-19.
- 6 **Isolation gown and gloves** are not required for those who screen negative. When administering vaccines, consider the use of gloves as per the [Canadian Immunization Guide](#). Gowns may be worn when seeing a series of patients who may have COVID-19 but should be changed if moving from a COVID suspect to a COVID negative screened patient.
- 7 **Clean** based on patient screen status: For patients who **screen negative**, use standard cleaning processes. For patients who **screen positive**, disinfect patient-contact surfaces (i.e., areas within 2 metres of the patient) as soon as possible, and clean and disinfect treatment areas, including all horizontal surfaces and any equipment used on the patient *before* another patient is brought into the treatment area or used on another patient.

* Some patients with underlying health conditions may not be able to tolerate masks. For patients refusing or unable to wear a mask, family doctors need to determine the right course of action for their own circumstances (e.g., ability to isolate the patient, etc.). Those choices may involve providing in-person assessment, deferring, rescheduling, or redirecting the patient to another setting that can safely provide care to them. (For more, see the [CPSO's COVID-19 FAQs for Physicians](#).)

Turn over/see next page for more information on healthcare provider precautions from the Ministry of Health.



Summary of Required Healthcare Provider (HCP) Precautions

Activity	HCP Precautions
Before every patient interaction	HCP must conduct a point-of-care risk assessment * to determine the level of precautions required
All interactions within 2 metres of patients who screen negative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Surgical/procedure mask • Eye protection (goggles or face shield) if patient is unmasked • Perform hand hygiene before and after contact with the patient and the patient environment and after the removal of PPE
All interactions within 2 metres of patients who screen positive	<p>Droplet and Contact Precautions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Surgical/procedure mask** • Isolation gown • Gloves • Eye protection (goggles or face shield) • Perform hand hygiene before and after contact with the patient and the patient environment and after the removal of PPE

* A Point-of-Care Risk Assessment (PCRA) assesses the task, the patient, and the environment. A PCRA should be completed by the HCP before every patient interaction to determine whether there is a risk to the provider or other individuals of being exposed to an infection, including COVID-19.

** N95 respirator must be worn for Aerosol-Generating Medical Procedures (AGMPs). See page 5 of this Technical Brief from Public Health Ontario for a [list of AGMPs](#).