

IPC Recommendations for Patient Placement in Emergency Departments/Urgent Care Centres/Maternal Triage

Note: The principles below will facilitate management of any communicable disease. Refer to the AHS websites for listing of all [Infection Prevention and Control \(IPC\)](#) resources. If you have any questions or comments contact IPC at ipcsurvstdsadmin@ahs.ca.


Patient placement in waiting areas

1. All patients and [designated family/support persons \(DFSPs\)](#) **must** [clean their hands](#) when entering the Emergency Department (ED)/Urgent Care Centre (UCC)/Maternal Triage (MT).
2. Display appropriate [signage](#) at ED/UCC entrance to encourage immediate hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette:
 - [Did you wash your hands? Stop Clean Your Hands](#)
 - [How to Use Alcohol Based Hand Rub](#)
 - [Cover Your Cough](#)
3. Patients with respiratory and gastrointestinal symptoms should don a procedure mask.
4. Separate symptomatic patients from asymptomatic patients, as able, in waiting areas.
5. Maximize physical distancing as best as possible between patients in waiting areas. There is no minimum required distance. Consider the following:
 - minimizing the number of chairs
 - alternating chairs that can be occupied
 - creating overflow waiting areas
 - establishing one-way traffic flow
 - having a separate entrance/exit
6. Patients do not need to maintain physical distance from their accompanying DFSP(s).
7. General DFSP/visitor guidance is outlined on the [Family/Visitors of Patients & Residents](#) website.

For more information contact
ipcsurvstdadmin@ahs.ca
© 2024 Alberta Health Services, IPC

Original date: June 17, 2020
Revised date: September 26, 2024

Table: Prioritization of Patient Placement in ED/UCC/MT

In the order of importance	Patient status	Placement
<div style="text-align: center;"> <p>More Important</p>  <p>Less Important</p> </div>	Suspect airborne illness [i.e. measles, varicella, pulmonary tuberculosis]	<p>Options by order of preference</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assign to negative pressure capable single room with 4-walls immediately on arrival – ensure negative pressure is turned on Assign to single room with 4-walls immediately on arrival – not negative pressure capable Mask patient and place in single-patient bedspace until transfer to an appropriate room/facility is arranged
	Respiratory and/or Core and/or Gastrointestinal (GI) symptoms present [based on Connect Care Communicable Disease Screen] AND unable to wear a mask	<p>Options by order of preference</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assign to single room on arrival Shared space: separate by 2m from other patients Shared space: separate from other patients using a cleanable physical barrier (i.e. less than 2m separation)
	Respiratory and/or Core and/or GI symptoms present [based on Connect Care Communicable Disease Screen] AND able to wear a mask	<p>Options by order of preference</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assign to single room on arrival Shared space: separate by 2m from other patients Shared space: separate from other patients using a cleanable physical barrier (i.e., less than 2m separation) Evaluate case-by-case for reduced spatial separation (i.e., able to perform hand hygiene, maintain physical distance and wear a mask continuously)
	NO Respiratory/Core or GI symptoms and risk factors present for COVID-19 [based on Connect Care Communicable Disease Screen]	<p>Options by order of preference</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shared space: separate by 2m from other patients Shared space: separate from other patients using a cleanable physical barrier (i.e., less than 2m separation) Evaluate case-by-case for reduced spatial separation (i.e., able to perform hand hygiene, maintain physical distance and wear a mask continuously)
	NO Respiratory/Core or GI symptoms + NO risk factors for COVID-19 [based on Connect Care Communicable Disease Screen]	<p>Options by order of preference</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Separate patients as best as possible.