# Interim IPC Recommendations

**COVID-19**

## Recommendations

In addition to **Routine Practices**

- **Contact and Droplet Precautions**
  - For current case definitions of COVID-19
    - [https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/assets/info/ppih/if-ppih-ncov-case-def.pdf](https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/assets/info/ppih/if-ppih-ncov-case-def.pdf)
    - Refer to [Public Health Agency of Canada](https://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca) for ongoing updates

## Affected Areas

- Refer to [World Health Organization](https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019) for information on affected areas.

## Accommodation

- As quickly as possible – place patient in a single room and implement **Contact and Droplet Precautions**
  - Single room with hard walls and door—contact Infection Prevention and Control if not available
  - Follow [IPC Recommendations for Cohorting Inpatients on Additional Precautions in Acute Care Facilities](https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/assets/info/ppih/if-ppih-ncov-case-def.pdf) after admission
  - For **Aerosol Generating Medical Procedures (AGMP)**:
    - Place patient in a private room with hard walls and a door; ensure the door is closed
    - Ask visitors and non-essential staff to leave the room
    - If available within the care unit, place patient in airborne isolation room (AIR); transport of patient to access AIR is not advisable
    - See the [Respiratory (ILI) Algorithm](https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/assets/info/ppih/if-ppih-ncov-case-def.pdf) for a list of AGMP
- **Contact and Droplet Precautions sign** visible on entry to room or bed space.
- If **Aerosol Generating Medical Procedures** are performed additional PPE is also required.

## Asymptomatic Patients (self-isolating prior to admission)

- Emergency and Inpatient
  - As quickly as possible – place patient in a single room and implement **Contact and Droplet Precautions** + **Routine Practices**
  - All other recommendations apply

- **Outpatient/Ambulatory Care Departments**
  - **Patients**:
    - Don new mask at healthcare facility entrance & wear throughout entire time in healthcare facility.
      - Change mask if it becomes moist.
      - Do not wear same mask that was worn from home to healthcare facility.
    - Perform hand hygiene (at minimum)
      - Entrance to healthcare facility, clinic, and clinic room.
      - Exit clinic room, clinic, healthcare facility

- **Healthcare providers**:
  - **Routine Practices**

## Medical Officer of Health Notification

- MOH will be notified by APL of presumptive and confirmed positive results.
- Contact tracing and follow-up will be guided by AHS Zone Public Health.
- **AHS Updates**
COVID-19 (Novel Coronavirus)  

Laboratory Testing  
- Refer to lab bulletin for testing, specimen handling and notification for laboratory testing.  
- Alberta Precision Laboratories will coordinate testing requests.  
- Only one swab needs to be collected for both routine respiratory panel testing and COVID-19 investigation. Rapid influenza testing may require a separate swab.

Hand Hygiene  
- Perform hand hygiene using alcohol-based hand rub (ABHR) or soap and water as described in Routine Practices.  
- Educate patients and visitors about how and when to use hand hygiene products.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE): Gowns, Gloves and Facial Protection  
- Wear new PPE to enter patient room or bed space. Healthcare workers are to wear contact and droplet PPE even if the patient is wearing a mask.  
- Do not wear PPE outside a patient room or bed space unless transporting contaminated items.  
- Remove soiled PPE as soon as possible.  
- Gloves are single-use. Use only once, then dispose of immediately after use.  
- Change gloves between care activities for the same patient (e.g., when moving from a contaminated body site to a clean body site). Sterile gloves are for sterile procedures.  
- For more detailed information on glove use see Glove Use and Selection: IPC Best Practice Guidelines or Proper Glove Use as part of Personal Protective Equipment  
- Prescription glasses do not meet Workplace Health and Safety regulations for eye protection.  
- New guidance released for continuous masking, Proper wearing of masks includes:  
  - ensuring a snug fit over the nose and under the chin;  
  - changing mask when it becomes moist;  
- Refer to the AHS Donning and Doffing PPE posters for details on careful removal and disposal of PPE. Do not reuse or disinfect single-use PPE. Reusable PPE must be cleaned before reuse (launder gowns, disinfect eye protection)  
- Effective and appropriate use of PPE keep staff uniforms and clothing clean. Staff may change before leaving healthcare facility, and take soiled clothing home in a bag. Soiled uniforms/clothing do not need any special handling in the laundry.

N95 Respirators & Eye Protection use ONLY when Aerosol Generating Medical Procedures are performed. See the Respiratory (ILI) Algorithm for a list of AGMP  
- All staff and physicians require fit-testing for an N95 respirator.  
- Perform hand hygiene before putting on and immediately after taking off N95 respirator.  
- Proper wearing of a N95 respirator includes:  
  - putting on the respirator before entering the patient’s room;  
  - moulding the metal bar over the nose;  
  - ensuring an airtight seal on the face, over top of the nose and under the chin;  
  - donning eye protection after N95 for AGMP;  
  - leaving the room and changing the respirator when it becomes moist;  
  - removing the respirator after leaving the patient’s room by touching elastic only;  
  - not wearing respirator around the neck.  
- Refer to the AHS Donning and Doffing PPE posters for details on careful removal and disposal of N95 respirators. Do not reuse or disinfect single-use PPE. Reusable PPE must be cleaned before reuse (launder gowns, disinfect eye protection)
### Handling Patient Care Items and Equipment
- Use disposable patient equipment when possible.
- Dedicate re-useable equipment for a single patient use only, until discharge.
- If reusable equipment cannot be dedicated for a single patient use, clean and disinfect it between patients.
- Additional Precaution rooms should contain a dedicated linen bag; double bag only if leaking.
- Do not share items that cannot be cleaned and disinfected.
- Shared computers, laptops and tablets, follow [Cleaning and Disinfection of Computers and Electronic Devices Guidance Poster](#).
- Used meal trays and dishes do not require special handling. Disposable dishes and utensils are not required.
- Special handling of linen or waste is not required; general waste from patients on additional precautions is not biomedical waste.

### Patient Ambulation Outside Room, Bed Space or Transfer
- Patients should leave the room or bed space for **essential purposes only**, exceptions require IPC consultation.
- Use predetermined transport routes to minimize exposure for staff, other patients and visitors.
- Before patients leave their room, educate or assist them to:
  - perform hand hygiene;
  - put on clean clothing or hospital gown/housecoat;
  - ensure dressings and incontinence products contain drainage;
  - put on a procedure/surgical mask.
  - for pediatric patients who do not tolerate a mask, cover them with a blanket or have them cuddle with care provider.
- Notify the receiving area, before departure, of the need for [Contact and Droplet Precautions](#).

### Environmental Cleaning
- Cleaning & disinfection is a shared responsibility by both healthcare workers and Environmental Services. Consider assigning designated staff to complete enhanced environmental cleaning.
- Routine practices, which include cleaning and disinfection of surfaces, is important to control the spread of COVID-19.
- AHS provided disinfectant products are effective against COVID-19. High touch surfaces, those which are frequently touched, are most likely to be contaminated.
- Any high touch surfaces that are visibly soiled should be immediately cleaned and disinfected.
- Remove curtains that are not necessary from patient areas.
- Inpatient areas for COVID-19 patients, apply discharge/transfer isolation cleaning protocol including changing curtains on discharge/transfer.
- In the ED, UCC and designated COVID-19 units apply “Enhanced Environmental Cleaning during COVID-19”- document available on Insite.
- Additional precaution signs should not be removed until both patient’s personal hygiene and environmental cleaning have been completed.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Visitors</th>
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<tr>
<td>• <strong>Visitor Alert Poster</strong> visiting is restricted to essential only, symptomatic visitors are not allowed.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Encourage visitors to perform <strong>hand hygiene</strong> and instruct family or visitors to wear masks and eye protection. <a href="#">Poster - Patients: When &amp; How to Wear a Mask</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Information on visiting is available <a href="#">here</a>.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• <a href="#">Contact and Droplet Isolation Precautions Family/Visitor information</a> is also available for visitors who must enter the room.</td>
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<td>• Visitors should be advised to report any signs and symptoms of acute illness to Public Health/HealthLink.</td>
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**ALL VISITORS TO CONGREGATE LIVING SITES**

- Please follow [Visitation in Congregate Living Sites](#) to minimize risk to the residents.

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<tr>
<th>Signs and Posters</th>
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<tr>
<td>• <a href="#">Contact and Droplet Precautions</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Patient Symptom &amp; Travel Risk Symptom Alert Poster</td>
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<tr>
<td>- <a href="#">Available here</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>• <a href="#">Cover Your Cough poster</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>• <a href="#">Contact and Droplet visual checklist</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>• List of all COVID-19 related <a href="#">posters</a></td>
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