

# Recommendations for Learners/Students during the COVID-19 Pandemic

**Note:** These recommendations were developed by Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) physicians and Workplace Health and Safety (WHS) to support safe provision of education for learners/students in the healthcare setting.

If you have any questions or comments contact IPC at [jpcsurvstdadmin@ahs.ca](mailto:jpcsurvstdadmin@ahs.ca).

## Best practice recommendations

### Purpose

To balance teaching for learners/students with optimal patient care and risk mitigation.

### Application

Alberta Health Services (AHS) employees, members of the medical and midwifery staffs, students, volunteers, and other persons acting on behalf of AHS (including contracted service providers as necessary).

1. Before placement/attendance in clinical areas learners/students and instructors are:
  - 1.1 Competent to assess their own symptoms.
  - 1.2 Fit for work. Complete daily fit for work screening either online [COVID-19 Guidance Fit for Work Screening Protocol](#) or using a paper tool: [standard/ non-continuing care](#), [continuing care](#) or [congregate living facilities licensed under MHSPA](#) (Licensed Addiction Treatment and Detox Facilities). **If you answer “yes” to any of the screening questions:**
    - Stay home, self-isolate and do not come into the healthcare facility.
    - Report fit for work screening results to your applicable manager/supervisor, medical leader, instructor and/or preceptor(s), as well as your post-secondary institution.
    - Refer to this [link](#) if you have questions about Fit for Work.
    - Review the [return-to-work decision chart](#).
    - Complete the online [Healthcare Worker Self-Assessment](#) tool to determine COVID-19 testing and self-isolation requirements.
  - 1.3 Able to follow and comply with AHS policies and guidance for COVID-19 including:
    - [Policy on Use of Masks During COVID-19](#);
    - [AHS Guidelines for Continuous Masking in Healthcare Settings](#);
    - [Physical Distancing at Work Guidance](#);
    - [N95 Respirator Fit Testing for Students and Instructors during the COVID-19 Pandemic](#);
    - Any Zone specific guidance, e.g., Central Zone requires healthcare providers wear a face shield in addition to continuous masking in emergency departments.
    - For further information refer to the [How to Wear a Mask \(Info Sheet\)](#) and the [AHS FAQ](#) with information about protecting yourself at work and home.
  - 1.4 Knowledgeable about, and able to implement IPC practices:
    - Complete AHS Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) education modules such as the Annual Continuing Education (ACE) [Infection Prevention & Control \(IPC\) Course](#) to learn the basics about how infections are spread and routine practices, and education modules developed specifically for COVID-19, i.e., [Contact and Droplet Personal Protective Equipment \(PPE\) for COVID-19 \(module\)](#).
      - Details about IPC [education and training](#) including how to access on the external AHS [IPC website](#). The IPC education is available free of charge for public access.

For more information contact  
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Version	Date (YYYY-MM-DD)
Created	2020-10-08
Updated	
Revised	

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- Follow [routine practices](#) including:
  - [Point of care risk assessment](#) (PCRA) to determine the personal protective equipment you need to protect yourself and prevent the spread of germs.
  - [Hand Hygiene](#), the most effective way to prevent the spread of communicable diseases and infections, including the AHS [Hand Hygiene Policy](#) and the 4 Moments for Hand Hygiene.
  - [Personal Protective Equipment](#), for donning and doffing of personal protective equipment (PPE); [How to Wear a Mask Poster](#); [PPE Checklist for Contact & Droplet Precautions](#). Tips:
    - Find out where PPE is kept on your assigned unit and access/wear PPE indicated by the PCRA.
    - Confirm that the N95 respirator you have been fit-tested for is stocked on the unit.
    - Ask your manager for a copy of the Hazard Identification Assessment & Control (HIAC) document and familiarize yourself with the hazards present on the unit and the controls in place to protect you.
  - [Equipment Cleaning](#), for cleaning shared equipment.
  - [Resource Manuals](#), for directions for known and suspect diseases (includes additional precautions/isolation).

1.5 Refer to other IPC resources as needed. For example:

- Emerging Issues ([COVID-19](#)) including the [IPC novel coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Interim Recommendations Info Sheet](#).
- Alberta Health's [website](#) for more information on preventing the spread of COVID-19.
- [Best Practice Recommendations](#), for recommendations on patient care, equipment cleaning, disinfection and storage, and equipment selection and process.
- [Outbreak Management](#).
- [Surveillance and Reporting](#).

2. The following considerations are provided to support learners/students in a clinical area while maintaining physical distancing at work, patient safety and prudent use of PPE on the clinical unit and entering patient rooms, especially for patients on additional precautions:

- Learners/students [physically distance](#) from one another and the patient by two metres unless the learner is providing active care to the patient, i.e., assessment, intervention or evaluation.
- Learners/students may enter a patient room when the teaching point cannot be made without the patient present or where the learner is necessary to provide patient care.
- Comprehensive review of patients takes place where learners/students can maintain a physical distance of two metres from other team members.

3. Additional Workplace Health and Safety recommendations to support learner/student safety:

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- Maintain physical distancing by configuring teaching venues such as board rooms and classrooms, i.e., two metres between individuals, and so that [alcohol-based hand rub](#) and [disinfectant wipes](#) are readily available.
- Do not share food or beverages.
- Minimize sharing of equipment, e.g., keyboard, mouse or telephones.
- Clean and disinfect any shared equipment with a [disinfectant wipe](#) between uses and perform hand hygiene.
- Maintain physical distancing during active learning and when on break time in the cafeteria or other areas in or around the facility.
- Minimize socialization across clinical cohorts to reduce the risk of spread between clinical areas, i.e., reduce socializing with each other on breaks including if placed in different units.

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