These recommendations apply to AHS and AHS contracted ambulatory care and outpatient settings, including laboratory collection sites. The provided guidance should be used to reduce the risk of communicable disease exposures and transmission (including COVID-19) in patients/clients and staff.

1. Environmental and equipment cleaning
   1.1 Remove all non-essential or non-cleanable items from clinic rooms. Whenever possible, remaining items are to meet IPC furniture replacement requirements.
   1.2 Cleaning is a joint responsibility between Environmental Services and the clinic staff. Implement increased frequency of cleaning for all high-touch and shared surfaces identified in the clinical setting (relevant to the discipline) with AHS approved low-level disinfectants. This may include but is not limited to:
      1.2.1 door knobs;
      1.2.2 light switches;
      1.2.3 hand rails;
      1.2.4 workstations.
   1.3 Ensure all patient care items are cleaned regularly in accordance with clinic standards. Always clean and disinfect non-critical equipment between patients with low-level disinfectants or ready-to-use disinfectant wipes as directed by the manufacturer instructions for use (MIFU).

2. Physical environment
   Waiting rooms
   2.1 Develop site-specific processes to achieve physical separation of at least 2 metres (2m) between all patients in waiting rooms. Examples of actions to maintain 2m of physical distancing between patients include but are not limited to:
      • 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.
   2.2 Patients do not need to maintain 2m of physical distance from their accompanying designated family/support person (DFSP) provided they are from the same household or have already been in close contact with each other.
   2.3 In order to meet operational needs, only after all strategies in 2.1 have been implemented:
      • May consider reduced spatial separation for asymptomatic patients who can perform hand hygiene, maintain physical distancing and continuously wear a medical mask. Maximize the distance between individuals if 2m cannot be maintained
      • Symptomatic patients or those who are unable to wear a mask effectively should be removed from shared waiting rooms and placed directly in a single patient exam room. Alternatively, maintain spatial separation of at least 2m.
2.4 Display appropriate signage at clinic entrance to encourage immediate hand hygiene and mask use.

2.5 Restrict public access to non-patient care areas including:
   - clean supply;
   - food preparation;
   - healthcare worker (HCW) only areas.

2.6 Clean public bathrooms daily or when soiled as per LES Cleaning Frequency Expectations (available on AHS Intranet).

2.7 Maintain differentiation between clean and dirty areas for supplies and equipment.

Patient care spaces
- Patient care spaces should be separated by a minimum of 2m which must be measured from outer edge of one bed or chair to the outer edge of another (not centre line to centre line).
- If not possible to maintain 2m spatial separation, separate by physical barrier, preferably one that is easily cleanable, see AHS Transparent Barrier Guidelines (available on AHS Intranet).
- Symptomatic patients on Modified Respiratory Precautions should:
  - be deferred if possible;
  - have appointments completed through another service delivery platform (phone or Zoom);
  - be directly placed in a single patient room if unable to defer; or
  - be scheduled at end of day.

3. Hand hygiene

3.1 Ensure sufficient hand hygiene stations and supplies are available and accessible to HCWs and patients.

3.2 Performing hand hygiene with ABHR is the preferred method for hand hygiene. However, there are times when handwashing with soap and water is required or availability of ABHR is limited. Ensure friction and wet time for a minimum of 20 seconds when using soap and water.

3.3 Assist patients who are unable to perform hand hygiene independently.

4. Healthcare Worker (HCW) preparation

4.1 Consider completing annual IPC training and refresh COVID-19 Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Module donning and doffing as required.

4.2 Post room capacity signage and physically distance furniture to maintain 2m separation in staff rooms, charting areas, locker rooms and eating areas.

4.3 Follow current AHS guidance as per IPC and WHS Staff COVID-19 Tips: Eating and Drinking at work, Personal Clothing, Cleaning Devices and Accessories info sheet.
Daily operations

5. Screening

5.1 Healthcare Workers (HCWs)

5.1.1 All HCWs will be required to comply with the Daily Fit to Work Screening Protocol, including a COVID-19 symptom and exposure questionnaire for every shift (If YES: HCW must not report to work and follow directions “when screening indicates unfit for work” as per protocol).

5.2 Patients [see also Appendix 1]

5.2.1 Patients are screened for COVID-19 symptoms and exposure risk factors. See the COVID-19 Expanded Testing Algorithm For Ambulatory Care/OPD.

5.2.2 Continue to screen patients on arrival to the clinic using the Ambulatory Care Respiratory Communicable Disease Screening Form (21666). Follow directions as provided in the form.

5.2.3 Sites/clinics may choose to use a pre-screening process as well, but this is not required.

5.3 Designated Family/Support Persons (DFSPs)/Visitors

5.3.1 DFSP/visitor guidance is outlined on the Designated Family/Support Person & Visitor Access website.

5.4 All patients and their DFSP are to have a Point of Care Risk Assessment (PCRA) completed as they may require additional precautions for non-COVID symptoms as per the IPC Resource Manual (i.e., manage the patient and DFSP as a unit).

6. Continuous masking and eye protection

6.1 Healthcare workers (HCWs)

6.1.1 Use continuous masking and continuous eye protection.

- Continuous eye protection is recommended in any setting where there are unanticipated or frequent COVID-19 exposures, if it is an initial point of contact, or there is greater risk of exposure or transmission.
- See Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) – Frequently Asked Questions.

6.1.2 Masks/respirators and disposable eye protection should be immediately changed and safely disposed of as a unit when:

- one or both becomes visibly soiled or moist/wet;
- whenever the HCW feels mask may have become contaminated;
- following an AGMP;
- after care for any symptomatic patients;
- when going on breaks or shift change.

6.1.3 Re-usable eye protection can be cleaned and disinfected.
6.2 Patients and DFSPs

6.2.1 All patients and DFSPs should be directed to perform hand hygiene and don a new procedure mask at the entrance of the facility/clinic.

- Cloth or homemade masks are not permitted.
- Non-AHS medical grade masks/respirators can be worn by patients and DFSPs, if correctly donned and in good condition.

6.3 Options for patients that cannot or will not don a mask are provided in *Managing Mask Exceptions at Care Facilities Memo* (available on AHS Intranet).

- Educate and post signage to encourage appropriate mask use by patients and DFSPs.
- Masks should remain in place until a HCW requests removal.

7. Routine practices

7.1 Use [Routine Practices](#) for all patient encounters.

7.2 **Point of Care Risk Assessment (PCRA)** guides the use of appropriate PPE based on the blood or body or body fluid exposure risk (in addition to transmission-based precautions).

7.3 Encourage proper PPE use.

7.3.1 Hand hygiene must be performed immediately before accessing PPE supplies.

7.3.2 Ensure that PPE is personal (fits you well) and protective (is worn properly).

- If worn, N95 respirators must be fit tested, and fit testing must be current (i.e., within the last 2 years).

7.3.3 Utilize visual aids to encourage appropriate isolation/additional precaution compliance, donning and doffing in designated clinic locations.

7.3.4 Promote the use of PPE champions through the [Provincial PPE Safety Coach Program](#).

7.4 Aerosol-Generating Medical Procedures (AGMP)

7.4.1 In addition to [Modified Respiratory Precautions](#), a fit tested N95 respirator is required during active AGMP procedures occurring on patients who have COVID-19 symptoms and/or exposure risk factors, or are confirmed seasonal respiratory virus or COVID-19 positive.

7.4.2 There is no settle time required after an AGMP is completed.
### Appendix 1: Patient Symptom Assessment and Related Actions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Patient status</th>
<th>Placement</th>
<th>HCW PPE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Asymptomatic + able to mask</strong></td>
<td>Proceed with appointment/procedure&lt;br&gt;Place patient in a space with 2m* separation from other patients. Consider exceptions on a case-by-case basis.</td>
<td>Perform PCRA for PPE other than continuous masking +/- eye protection.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Asymptomatic + unable to mask</strong></td>
<td>Options by order of preference:&lt;br&gt;- Assign to single room on arrival&lt;br&gt;- Separate by 2m* from other patients&lt;br&gt;- Separate from other patients using a cleanable physical barrier&lt;br&gt;Perform PCRA for PPE other than continuous masking +/- eye protection.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Asymptomatic + travelled anywhere outside of Canada within the last 14 days</strong></td>
<td><strong>Fully immunized for COVID-19:</strong>&lt;br&gt;Proceed with appointment/procedure&lt;br&gt;Place patient in a space with 2m* separation from other patients. Consider exceptions on a case-by-case basis.</td>
<td>Perform PCRA for PPE other than continuous masking +/- eye protection.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Date of return (if applicable):</strong></td>
<td><strong>Not fully immunized for COVID-19:</strong>&lt;br&gt;Defer appointment/procedure if possible OR&lt;br&gt;If appointment/procedure cannot be deferred, implement Modified Respiratory Precautions.</td>
<td>Modified Respiratory Precautions. N95 respirator required for AGMP.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Symptomatic with Core or GI symptoms</strong></td>
<td>Consider deferring appointment/procedure&lt;br&gt;If appointment cannot be deferred:&lt;br&gt;- Directly place in single room on arrival if visit must occur.&lt;br&gt;- Consider scheduling visit for end of day.</td>
<td>Modified Respiratory Precautions. N95 respirator required for AGMP.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Direction provided for patient to remain on quarantine or self-isolation</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The 2m space is considered to be measured from the outer edge of one chair or bed to the outer edge of another.<br>**For neonates/infants in car seat, consider putting a blanket over the car seat, and for young infants consider having DFSP holding the infant with face turning inwards to minimize droplet spread in open areas.<br>Unless unable to, all patients are to continuously mask except when directed by HCW.

**Note:** For Cancer Care & Transplant, a COVID-19 risk factor assessment may still be considered. Please discuss with site IPC.