

Masking Guidance in Community Physician Settings during COVID-19 Pandemic

This document provides guidance for community primary and specialty physician care settings to assist in masking decisions for patients and providers. This guidance is based on direction from the Chief Medical Officer of Health and Alberta Health Services. Providers should consider practice environment risk assessments, clinical judgement and professional association guidance in addition to this guidance.

General Guidance

1. [Virtual care](#) options should be used when possible.
2. Patients should call ahead for assessment prior to presenting to community physician settings (including essential accompanying persons).
3. Masking guidance:
 - **PPE for provider when caring for patient with influenza like illness (ILI) symptoms or confirmed/suspect COVID-19:** [Contact and Droplet Precautions](#) - hand hygiene, procedure mask, face shield, gown and gloves
 - **Procedure mask for provider caring for asymptomatic patient:** [Continuous Masking](#) and [Point of Care Risk Assessment](#) (PCRA) - hand hygiene and procedure mask
 - **Procedure mask for patients with ILI symptoms or confirmed/suspect COVID-19):** Hand hygiene and procedure mask at entrance and wears for full visit
 - **Mask (any type) for all patients and essential companions (without ILI symptoms or confirmed/suspect COVID-19):** Hand hygiene and mask at entrance and wears for full visit
 - See this [Guidance to Help Make Continuous Masking Work for You](#) for some practical suggestions and considerations for frontline staff

	Hand Hygiene	Procedure Mask	Any mask	Gloves	Face Shield	Gown
Provider (ILI, suspect or confirmed COVID-19)	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
Provider (asymptomatic patient)	✓	✓		PCRA	PCRA	PCRA
Patient (ILI, suspect or confirmed COVID-19)	✓	✓				
Asymptomatic patient and essential companion	✓		✓			

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4. All patients and accompanying persons should be screened for symptoms of COVID-19 prior to entering clinic space as per [current screening criteria](#) and staff should follow [infection control and isolation protocols](#).
5. If a patient meets screening criteria:
 - Consider testing for COVID-19 if feasible, or
 - Refer to the [COVID-19 self-assessment tool](#), or
 - Refer to 811 for further follow-up, or
 - Follow established zonal processes
6. Evidence is rapidly changing, review [PPE page](#) for latest guidance.
7. Provide [educational materials](#) as appropriate and post signage where visible.