MEMO

Date: December 9, 2021
To: All Health-Care Workers
From: Provincial Personal Protective Equipment Committee
Re: Wear the Right PPE & Get your COVID-19 Vaccine Booster

We continue to closely monitor the evolving COVID-19 situation, including research and evidence on transmission and any additional precautions made necessary by highly infectious variants, including Delta and now Omicron.

Health-care workers are reminded of the importance of choosing the right personal protective equipment, wearing it correctly, exercising caution while donning and doffing, and following all other infection prevention and control protocols, particularly regular hand hygiene.

These measures have provided significant protection throughout the pandemic, including for those providing care to confirmed cases of COVID-19.

The addition of highly effective COVID-19 vaccines has increased that protection, however all health-care workers are encouraged to get a third dose (booster) as soon as you are eligible.

Our priority is to ensure every step is taken to keep staff and patients, residents and clients safe from the virus. Our guidance and protocols are firmly rooted in emerging evidence, and reviewed and validated by clinical experts.

Screening
We are closely monitoring the quarantine requirements put in place for returning travelers in response to the Omicron variant. We will keep the health-care providers page updated as information becomes available and/or as countries are added to the Public Health Agency of Canada’s (PHAC) list.

Select the Right PPE, Wear it Correctly and Consistently
The combination of existing provincial PPE Requirements, consistent use of infection prevention and control protocols (hand hygiene, caution donning and doffing PPE, physical distancing), and vaccination against COVID-19 provide the best possible protection to health-care workers, including those caring for COVID-19 positive patients/residents/clients.

Choose the right PPE for the setting and wear your PPE correctly at all times.

Donning and doffing remain high risk moments. Pay attention, take your time, be consistent.

Provincial PPE Requirements – All Areas
Provincial Guidance for AGMPs
Health-Care Worker Infections – Proper PPE Use, IPC Protocols, Booster Vaccine are Key

We are closely monitoring the incidence of health-care worker infections and have been since early in 2020. We are confident, based on available information, that existing guidance remains effective in preventing infection, provided appropriate PPE is consistently worn, and donned and doffed correctly.

PPE Audits have identified inappropriate use and wearing of various items of PPE at facilities across the province. Masks worn on foreheads or chins, eye protection not being worn, or “double masking” do not provide the appropriate level of protection and can increase your risk of infection.

Remember – a simple reminder to a co-worker to wear their PPE correctly could protect them from an exposure or potential infection.

COVID-19 Vaccine Booster

A third dose of the COVID-19 vaccine offers excellent protection to anyone who received their second dose six months ago (or longer). Data on health-care worker infections shows that those testing COVID-19 positive today are on average 185 days from their second dose.

The COVID-19 vaccines work, but like all vaccines, their protection can vary from person to person and can be reduced over time.

Emerging evidence* shows a lowered risk of testing positive for COVID-19 beginning one week after a third dose booster. Between 28 and 65 days following the booster shot, evidence is showing an 86 per cent reduction in the likelihood of testing positive for COVID-19.

Do not hesitate! If you are six months (or longer) from your second dose, get your third dose booster today!

Thank you to all health-care workers for your commitment to the care and safety of all Manitobans, including other members of your care team.

Together, and with the appropriate PPE and precautions, we can keep each other healthy and safe.

*Evidence drawn from a large health maintenance organization study in Israel comparing effectiveness of vaccines on individuals with two dose vaccine protection and those with three dose vaccine protection.
https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamainternalmedicine/fullarticle/2786890

PPE Resources

Test your knowledge of PPE requirements within and across patient zones. Additional resources and guidance related to proper donning and doffing are also available at https://sharedhealthmb.ca/covid19/providers/ppe-resources/.

- Knowledge Challenge – Facility
- Knowledge Challenge – PPE and You
- Knowledge Challenge – In-Home Visits