

## COVID-19 HIGHLIGHTS

### Primary Care Providers in Community

Public health officials continue to monitor, gather information, assess risk and recommend evidence-based approaches for health-care providers, including primary care providers practicing in the community. Primary care providers play an important role in the detection of, and response to, COVID-19.

**This document is intended to supplement clinical judgement, not supersede it.**

Recommendations are based on current evidence and are being continually reviewed and reassessed.

**Up-to-date recommendations, information and resources (e.g., signage) for health-care providers are available by referring to the following information sources:**

**Health-care providers, clinics and physicians are directed to visit**

**<https://sharedhealthmb.ca/covid19/providers/>**

**Patients can be directed to the Manitoba Health, Seniors and Active Living**

**Coronavirus website: <https://www.gov.mb.ca/health/coronavirus/index.html>.**

### Screening

- Clinics should screen via telephone before scheduling an appointment for a patient who screens positive for COVID-19. If the clinic does not have the appropriate space and precautions to perform COVID-19 assessment and/or testing, direct patient to call **Health Links – Info Santé (204-788-8200 or toll-free 1-888-315-9257)** to be directed to a health facility that is prepared to assess and test for COVID-19.
- Screen individuals (if in person, maintain a 2-metre distance) with acute respiratory illness of any degree of severity who, within 14 days before onset of illness, had any of the following exposures:
  - Had \*exposure to a confirmed case of COVID-19 ((\*Exposure includes attendance at large group settings where someone has been confirmed to have COVID-19.); **OR**
  - Travelled outside Manitoba, including travel within Canada, in the 14 days before onset of illness; **OR**
  - Had lab exposure working with COVID-19 specimens

- **New additional criteria:** Symptomatic (respiratory symptoms of any severity), regardless of travel or contact history, and **Yes** to one of the following questions:

Are you:

- A health-care worker?
- A resident of – or do you work in - an isolated or remote community or congregate setting, such as a correctional facility, shelter, long-term care or residential facility, or a remote work camp?
- Post signage at entrances and reception areas instructing patients with COVID-19 symptoms (cough, fever, sore throat, runny nose, shortness of breath and/or breathing difficulties) to alert staff.
  - **Clinics that do NOT have the appropriate space and precautions may consider posting signage at the front entrance instructing patients who screen positive to NOT enter and instead call Health Links – Info Santé (204-788-8200 or toll-free 1-888-315-9257) to be redirected to a health facility that is prepared to assess/test for COVID-19.**
- Make procedure or surgical masks, tissues and alcohol-based hand cleanser available at all entrances/reception areas.

### Influenza-Like Illness Signs & Symptoms

- Cough, fever, sore throat, running nose, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing.

### Infection Prevention & Control Measures

**Personal protective equipment (PPE) requests are being triaged and responded to by Logistics within the Province’s Incident Management Structure.**

Requests may be directed as follows:

**In Winnipeg** 204-926-6050

**Toll-Free** 1-877-477-4773

- All patients who screen positive and accompanying people/escorts (even if asymptomatic) should immediately be instructed to wear a procedure/surgical mask and be placed in a designated separate waiting area/space (maintain 2 metre/6 feet separation). Do not allow patient to cohort with other patients and limit visitors to only those who are essential.

- **During clinical assessment, physicians and staff must use contact/droplet precautions and wear required PPE which includes gowns, gloves, procedure/surgical mask and eye protection/face shield, particularly during specimen collection.**
- **N95 masks are only recommended for aerosol-generating medical procedures:** <https://sharedhealthmb.ca/files/aerosol-generating-medical-procedures-AGMPs.pdf>.
- If your clinic/facility does NOT have a separate waiting area/space to isolate patient AND PPE available, reception should screen patients while maintaining a 2-metre distance/separation. If patient screens positive, direct patient to call Health Links – Info Santé (204-788-8200 or toll-free 1-888-315-9257) to be directed to a health facility that is prepared to assess and test for COVID-19.

## Testing

- Assuming the appropriate space and PPE precautions are taken, testing for COVID-19 may occur at any primary care clinic across the province.
- Testing for COVID-19 requires a nasopharyngeal (NP) swab placed in viral transport medium or NP aspirate, shipped category B to Cadham Provincial Laboratory (CPL). If such a specimen is being collected for influenza-like illness (ILI) or presumed viral respiratory tract infection (RTI), then a second swab is not required.
- There is currently no serological test for COVID-19.
- Submit the specimen with the completed CPL General Requisition <https://www.gov.mb.ca/health/publichealth/cpl/docs/mg696.pdf>. Include “Suspect COVID-19” on the requisition, under “other tests” or “requests”, and include the relevant travel history and symptoms. **Clearly identify on the requisition if the patient is an inpatient, a health-care worker or a resident of a remote/isolated community or congregate setting.** Unlabeled specimens will be last in queue and should expect lengthy delay.
- Following the visit, the patient area and all horizontal surfaces should be cleaned and disinfected (including shared equipment) as per provincial infection prevention and control guidance, refer to pages 66-68, 71 and 78 in <https://www.gov.mb.ca/health/publichealth/cdc/docs/ipc/rpap.pdf>. Clinics should minimize materials in clinic rooms that are designated for assessment and/or testing of patients for COVID-19.

## Treatment and Management

- COVID-19 test results are available approximately 24 hours after CPL receives the specimen. As test volumes increase, the timeline for receipt of results may experience delays.
- If the patient can manage their symptoms at home:
  - Advise patient to self-isolate at home and provide patient with fact sheet on what to do while waiting for COVID-19 test results and emphasize the importance of adhering to these recommendations:  
[https://www.gov.mb.ca/health/publichealth/factsheets/coronavirus\\_waiting.pdf](https://www.gov.mb.ca/health/publichealth/factsheets/coronavirus_waiting.pdf).
- If the patient requires hospital admission and/or additional tests (e.g., x-ray or labs): Contact EMS to make safe arrangements for travel to the hospital that maintains isolation of the patient. Private vehicle to hospital is preferred if ambulance is not required. Patient should be kept in a separate room with the door closed until transport is ready. The patient must wear a procedure/surgical mask at all times while waiting for, and during, transport.
- **If the COVID-19 test results are negative: call the patient to advise them of their results.** Patients who were self-monitoring and/or self-isolating prior to being tested for COVID-19, should be advised to continue to self-monitor and/or self-isolate for the remainder of the 14-day period. Instruct the patient to stay home until their symptoms have resolved. If symptoms change or worsen, advise patient to call your office, Health Links – Info Santé or 911 if it is an emergency.
- **If the COVID-19 test results are positive: call the patient to advise them of their results.** Public Health will complete the *Novel coronavirus (COVID-19) – Case Investigation Form* - <https://sharedhealthmb.ca/covid19/providers/> - and may request clinical information from you. Advise patient that Public Health will be following up to conduct active, daily monitoring of their symptoms while they are at home recovering. If symptoms change or worsen, advise patient to call your office, Health Links – Info Santé or 911 if it is an emergency.
  - Patients who were in the waiting room at the same time as the COVID-19 positive patient do NOT need to be notified for follow-up or testing UNLESS the COVID-19 positive case was not appropriately isolated and wearing a mask. In the event that the appropriate space and precautions were NOT taken, Public Health will be involved to assess the risk and communicate with any individuals who may have been exposed to the positive COVID-19 case.

**For more information:**

Visit the **Manitoba Coronavirus** website: <https://www.gov.mb.ca/health/coronavirus/>.

Physicians and clinic staff who have returned from travel, including travel within Canada, in the last fourteen (14) days must [immediately self-identify](#) to **Occupational Health Services**, available centrally by calling toll-free **1-888-203-4066**. As call volumes increase, the timeline for response may experience some delays. The Occupational Health Nurse/designate will verify your areas of travel and recommend either self-monitoring or self-isolation, depending on your travel history and latest public health recommendations.

**Note:** For clinic staff directed to self-monitor, their role will be considered to ensure it is suitable for them to remain at work while self-monitoring. **All** clinic staff who develop symptoms during the self-monitoring period will be required to self-isolate immediately.