

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 requires services utilizing **Orange Zone** Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) requirements.

These include patients who screen positive for the following:

Individuals who screen positive for one symptom listed in category A or two symptoms in category B should be considered symptomatic.

A. Do you have new onset of any of the below symptoms?		
• Fever > 38°C or subjective fever / chills	Yes	No
• Cough	Yes	No
• Sore Throat / hoarse voice	Yes	No
• Shortness of breath/breathing difficulties	Yes	No
• Loss of taste or smell	Yes	No
• Vomiting or diarrhea for more than 24 hours	Yes	No
• Poor feeding (if an Infant)	Yes	No
B. Do you have new onset of 2 or more of any of the below symptoms?		
• Runny nose	Yes	No
• Muscle aches	Yes	No
• Fatigue	Yes	No

• Conjunctivitis	Yes	No
• Headache	Yes	No
• Skin rash of unknown cause	Yes	No
• Nausea or loss of appetite	Yes	No

Individuals who, in the past 14 days, have:

- Returned from travel outside of Manitoba **OR**
- Been in contact with someone that is confirmed to have COVID-19 **OR**
- Had a lab exposure working directly with biological specimens known to contain COVID-19

Clinics should post signage at entrances and reception areas instructing patients with COVID-19 symptoms to alert staff. <https://sharedhealthmb.ca/files/outpatient-department-poster-letter.pdf>

Clinics that do not have the appropriate space and precautions to assess patients requiring **ORANGE ZONE PPE requirements may consider posting signage at the front entrance instructing patients who screen positive to **NOT** enter and instead contact the clinic for appropriate directions, which may include:**

a) assess patients using virtual means (telephone or video), recognizing the limitations of these modalities. For patients consulting for respiratory symptoms or influenza-like-illness, instruct those with mild symptoms who do not require a physical assessment to seek testing at their local COVID- 19 testing location (refer to: <https://www.gov.mb.ca/covid19/locations.html>) or to call Health Links – Info Santé (204-788-8200 or toll-free 1-888-315-9257)

b) For asymptomatic **ORANGE ZONE** patients (such as essential travelers, transport workers) or patients with mild to moderate symptoms (or respiratory symptoms which may or may not be related to COVID-19) who require a physical assessment should seek care at a health facility/clinic that is prepared to assess COVID-19 Suspect or Positive individuals.

c) instruct patients with severe/emergent symptoms to call 9-1-1 for emergency services.

Outpatient clinics/primary care clinics that do not have capacity to provide services to individuals who are COVID-19 suspect (Orange Zone), are strongly encouraged to maintain a list of providers (public or private providers) who are able to provide services to COVID-19 suspects or COVID-19 positive individuals.

- Clinics that have the capacity to assess patients requiring **ORANGE ZONE** PPE, should follow previously issued guidance for primary care providers on approaches to patient care

and PPE. Refer to: <https://sharedhealthmb.ca/files/covid-19-primary-care-providers-in-community.pdf> and <https://sharedhealthmb.ca/files/covid-19-ppe-table-outpatient.pdf>.

NOTE: Asymptomatic Orange Zone clients/patients should not be mixed with symptomatic clients/patients (e.g. use of designated Orange Zone waiting rooms/areas, treatment rooms etc.).

Infection Prevention & Control Measures

- All outpatient services/primary care services should optimize the use of virtual care (telephone or video) to reduce the volume of individuals needing in-person visits.
- Clinics should consider staggering provider start times/shifts to reduce the number of people (both staff and patients) to optimize opportunity for physical distancing.

All patients attending a community-based health care setting are strongly encouraged to wear a non-medical mask when presenting for their appointment/service.

- Clinics should ensure that appropriate measures are in place to ensure appropriate physical distancing, which may include: signage, lines/arrows on floors to manage flow, plexi-glass barriers at reception desks, reduction of capacity of waiting room, etc.
- Clinics should ensure that tissues and alcohol-based hand rub are available at all entrances/reception areas.
- 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 as indicated in the Provincial Personal Protective Equipment Requirements <https://sharedhealthmb.ca/files/covid-19-provincial-ppe-requirements>.**
- **N95 respirators are only recommended for aerosol-generating medical procedures: <https://sharedhealthmb.ca/files/aerosol-generating-medical-procedures-AGMPs.pdf>.**
- 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. To facilitate cleaning and disinfection, clinics should reduce furniture and equipment as much as possible.

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, health-care worker, transport worker, child care provider or educational worker or a resident of a remote/isolated community or congregate setting.** Unlabeled specimens will be last in queue and should expect lengthy delay.

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.
- 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.

Staff considerations

Clinics should ensure all physicians and staff self-screen daily using <https://sharedhealthmb.ca/covid19/screening-tool/>.

- If screening is positive for symptoms or exposure, individuals should seek testing and follow the directions for self-isolation.
- Physicians or staff who develop symptoms while at work, should leave work, seek testing and self-isolate.
- All physicians or staff with symptoms and/or who have sought testing should self-isolate pending resolution of symptoms and/or test result.
- Return to work based on results and resolution of symptoms:
 - If symptomatic but not tested, isolate for 10 days from symptom onset.
 - If symptomatic and test result is negative for COVID-19, isolate until symptoms have been resolved for 24 hours.
 - If COVID-19 positive, return to work will be based on direction provided by Public Health and Occupational Health Services or designate.

Physicians and clinic staff who have returned from travel outside of Manitoba 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.

For more information:

Visit the **Manitoba COVID-19** website: <https://www.gov.mb.ca/covid19/>.

Change tracker:

- Jan. 29, 2021: Updated travel screening with requirement to self-isolate for 14 days following travel to anywhere outside Manitoba.