

# Organize Time and Space for Patient & Staff Safety

Document current as of: April 21 2020

This checklist was created for community physicians in Alberta to support the organization of time and space for patient, staff, and physician safety. The checklist is organized by steps to consider taking within each room of the clinic. For more detailed information and most up to date guidance on safety, check <https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/topics/Page16947.aspx>.

Based on your affiliation with other partners (e.g., PCNs) there may be additional resources available on the zone specific community response to COVID-19.

## General Considerations

- Advise all patients to call prior to coming into the clinic (post information on clinic website, update phone line and answering machine, and/or send email to all patients. Consider creating a Facebook page for real-time patient updates).
- Consider clinical scenarios that may warrant in-person care (e.g., non-infectious complaint of acute nature, prenatal/immunizations, allergy shots for those severely affected – more information [HERE](#); Virtual Care Scope of Practice [HERE](#); statement from CPSA on defining 'urgent' in COVID-19 [HERE](#)).
- Clinic staff and physicians complete the daily fit for work questionnaire (screening tool [HERE](#)).
- Consider working through routine clinical scenarios with support and guidance. For more information on accessing a free, in-person or virtual 'tabletop simulation' please email: [Raad Fadaak](mailto:Raad.Fadaak@albertahealthservices.ca)

## Outside of Clinic

- Post signage on entry to the office and at reception. If the office is in a shared building, post signage at entrance to building (AHS signage [HERE](#), [Patient Symptom poster](#)).
- Screen patients over the phone before scheduling appointment (Question 1 on daily fit for work questionnaire, [HERE](#)).
  - If patient has ILI symptoms, consider a remote assessment (e.g., remote COVID assessment, [HERE](#)) or have patient call 811.

## Reception Area

- Provide hand sanitizer, tissue, masks, and a hands-free waste receptacle at clinic entrance.
- Use a Plexiglas barrier between patient and reception to prevent spread. If a Plexiglas barrier is not available, staff should maintain a 2-meter distance. Mark this physical distance on the floor of the clinic. If a 2-meter distance cannot be maintained, staff should use contact precautions.
- Scan health cards or identification visually (i.e., "hands free").
- Repeat screening for COVID-19 symptoms when patient presents to clinic (Question 1 on daily fit for work questionnaire, [HERE](#)).
- Space chairs in waiting room at minimum 2 meters apart and remove all extra objects in waiting room (e.g., coffee tables, magazines, toys, brochures). When possible, avoid having patients in the waiting room at all (examples below on how to do this):
  - Consider having the patient call from outside the clinic (e.g., in car) once arrived and move to clinic room when available. For patients with ILI symptoms or confirmed COVID-19, provide them with a mask and room immediately with the door closed.
  - Book patients at non-overlapping intervals to minimize number of patients entering/exiting the clinic at the same time.
  - Limit the number of physicians taking in-person appointments at a given time. Potentially create two separate teams to manage patient flow, if team is large enough.
- When possible, encourage patients to come to their appointment alone and do not allow extra people in the clinic room (e.g., spouses, children).

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## Clinic Exam Rooms

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- Create a separate space in clinic for COVID positive patients.
- Use minimal number of clinic rooms and clear rooms of extraneous objects and/or cover up the things that you can't move like wall-mounted ophthalmoscopes. Consider removing computer keyboard and mouse, chart in another room.
- Minimize people entering the exam room, ideally have one provider do all aspects of the assessment in the exam room, including vitals as necessary.
- Have patients move directly to the exam table/beds in clinic room by removing extra chairs.
- Keep distance until exam, and use appropriate PPE (posters on donning PPE [HERE](#) & doffing PPE [HERE](#)).
- Disinfect rooms immediately between uses (guidelines on cleaning & disinfecting [HERE](#) [Community Provider FAQ question #22], [AHS Cleaning Surfaces](#), [Electronic Disinfection](#), and [Stethoscope Cleaning](#)).
- Check PPE guidelines (guidelines on continuous masking [HERE](#)).
- Interact with other clinic staff at 2-meter distance.

## Sources

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AHS Signage & Posters. <https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/topics/Page17000.aspx>.

Considerations for Family Physicians: In Person Visits When Phone/Video isn't Enough. <https://www.ontariofamilyphysicians.ca/tools-resources/timely-trending/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov/considerations-for-in-person-visits.pdf>.

COVID-19: a remote assessment in primary care. <https://www.bmj.com/content/368/bmj.m1182>.

COVID-19 Guidance: Primary Care Providers in a Community Setting. [http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/publichealth/coronavirus/docs/2019\\_primary\\_care\\_guidance.pdf](http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/publichealth/coronavirus/docs/2019_primary_care_guidance.pdf).

COVID-19: Tips for Family Doctors. <https://www.ontariofamilyphysicians.ca/tools-resources/timely-trending/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov/novel-coronavirus-tips-for-family-doctors>.

CPSA Defining Urgent in COVID-19. [http://www.cpsa.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/AP\\_COVID-19-Defining-Urgent.pdf](http://www.cpsa.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/AP_COVID-19-Defining-Urgent.pdf)

Daily Fit for Work Questionnaire. <https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/assets/info/ppih/if-ppih-covid-19-daily-fitness-for-work-screening-questionnaire.pdf>.

Primary Care FAQ. <https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/assets/info/ppih/if-ppih-covid-19-primary-care-faq.pdf>.

University of Calgary. Human Factors, Infection Prevention and Control and Organizational Sociology team supported with a CIHR Rapid Response for COVID-19 funding.

Virtual Care Playbook. [https://www.cma.ca/sites/default/files/pdf/Virtual-Care-Playbook\\_mar2020\\_E.pdf](https://www.cma.ca/sites/default/files/pdf/Virtual-Care-Playbook_mar2020_E.pdf).