



COVID-19 Infection Prevention and Control: Guidance for Test Collection & Assessment Centres

September 9, 2021

The following guidance has been updated from the March 9th, 2021 version and reflects changes to align with:

- [BC Ministry of Health Infection Prevention and Control Policy for all Health Authorities \(Sep 1, 2021\)](#)
- [BC Ministry of Health Mask Use in Health Care Facilities During the COVID-19 Pandemic Policy \(Aug 31, 2021\)](#)

Test collection and assessment centres can be stand-alone clinics, outdoor drive-through centres and/or combined with urgent and primary care centres or other clinic spaces.

Refer to the [COVID-19 testing information on the BC Centre for Disease Control's \(BCCDC\) website](#) for more information on who should be tested, as well as procedures for specimen test collection and labelling.

On discharge from the centre, and when indicated, provide patients with information on [self-isolation after a COVID-19 test](#) and other patient education materials.

Set-Up for a Test Collection and Assessment Centre

Clinic Settings

- Separate patients coming in for COVID-19 testing from patients seeking other types of medical attention by:
 - Designating separate entrances, waiting areas and treatment rooms;
 - Creating separate and staggered appointment times for the two patient groups;
 - Asking patients coming for COVID-19 testing to wait in their car or outside the clinic until it is their turn.
- Maintain physical barriers that can be cleaned and disinfected if they do not impede normal operations. Examples include:
 - Clear partitions at reception counters or throughout waiting areas;

Original version: March 9th, 2021. Revised: September 9th, 2021



- Enclosed treatment rooms or cleanable dividers (e.g., wipeable privacy screens) between patient assessment and treatment areas.
- Establish hand hygiene stations, including alcohol-based hand rub (ABHR) containing at least 70% alcohol and/or hand hygiene sinks with soap and water, at the entrance and exit of the clinic.
- [Post signage](#) for hand hygiene, how to wear a mask and other infection and exposure control measures inside the facility.
- Ensure appropriate cleaning and disinfection supplies are available for use, as outlined in the provincial [environmental cleaning and disinfectants for clinic settings poster](#).
- Heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) systems should be properly installed and regularly inspected and maintained. Where feasible, optimize ventilation in patient care areas and rooms, especially where patients suspected or confirmed of having COVID-19 are accommodated and cared for. Information on optimizing ventilation in the context of COVID-19 is available from [ventilation resources on the BCCDC webpage](#). When adjustments are needed, consultation with HVAC specialists is recommended.

Outdoor Test Collection and Assessment Settings

- Establish hand hygiene stations, including ABHR containing at least 70% alcohol and/or hand hygiene sinks with soap and water, at the point of test collection and assessment.
- Create covered test collection areas (e.g., pop-up-tents) to protect health-care workers from the weather and prevent personal protective equipment (PPE) and supplies from dust and moisture. Covering the collection area on multiple sides is recommended to provide maximum coverage during inclement weather.
- Establish alternatives (e.g., indoor clinic spaces or covered trailers) to outdoor testing during inclement weather, whenever possible.
- Implement appropriate measures to address the effects of spending prolonged periods of time in hot or cold outdoor environments. Refer to your regional health authority for specific heat and cold stress guidance or the [Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety for information on working in hot or cold environments](#).

Infection Prevention and Control Procedures

- Provide a medical mask for patients entering the COVID-19 test collection and assessment clinic and ask them to perform hand hygiene using ABHR or soap and water at the clinic entrance.
- Health care workers must follow the [Mask Use in Health Care Facilities During the COVID-19 Pandemic](#) policy.



- Health care workers who have close contact with patients (within two metres) with confirmed and/or suspected COVID-19 must wear PPE including medical mask, eye protection, gloves and gown or coveralls.
 - Refer to the [BCCDC's PPE webpage](#) for information on how to don and doff PPE;
 - Follow [droplet and contact precautions](#) for all direct contact with patients presenting for COVID-19 testing and/or assessment;
 - Use of PPE (mask, eye protection and gown) can be extended, unless it becomes damaged or visibly soiled. Properly doff PPE and either dispose (if disposable) or clean and disinfect (if reusable) when leaving the patient care area (e.g., going into clean supply rooms, at the end of a shift or during break/mealtimes);
 - Gloves must be changed and rigorous hand hygiene must be performed between each patient;
 - Use an N95 respirator or equivalent instead of a medical mask when performing [aerosol generating medical procedures](#) (AGMP) for patients with suspected or confirmed COVID-19. Specimen collections via nasopharyngeal swab and gargle tests are not considered AGMP.
- Perform hand hygiene:
 - Before and after contact with a patient or the patient care environment;
 - Before and after breaks;
 - Before clean or sterile procedures;
 - After possible exposure to body fluid;
 - Before donning PPE; and,
 - In between each step when doffing PPE.
- Additional gear options (e.g., high visibility vests) and layered clothing:
 - Select additional gear options that minimize the risk of self-contamination and do not require removal over the head. Care must be taken to avoid self-contamination when taking off additional gear.
 - Additional clothing for warmth must be worn underneath PPE.
 - Additional gear should be doffed before removing PPE.
 - Perform hand hygiene immediately after removing additional gear.
 - Additional gear worn on top of PPE should be cleaned and disinfected or laundered after each use. Follow manufacturer's instructions for cleaning/disinfecting or laundering.
- Follow provincial [environmental cleaning and disinfectants for clinic settings](#) guidance to clean and disinfect surfaces and reusable shared equipment.



References

BC Centre for Disease Control. *COVID-19: Infection Prevention and Control Guidance for Community-Based Physicians, Nursing Professionals and Midwives in Clinic Settings*. Available at: <http://www.bccdc.ca/health-professionals/clinical-resources/covid-19-care/clinical-care/community-based-health-care>

Public Health Agency of Canada. *Routine Practices and Additional Precautions for Preventing the Transmission of Infection in Healthcare Settings*; 2017. Available at: <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/publications/diseases-conditions/routine-practices-precautions-healthcare-associated-infections.html>

Acknowledgement

This document was developed by the Provincial Infection Control Network (PICNet) of B.C. in consultation with the provincial COVID-19 Infection Prevention and Control/Workplace Health and Safety Provincial Task Group.

