

INFECTIOUS DISEASES AND INFECTION PREVENTION & CONTROL COVID-19 COMMITTEE

ID/IPC Update

May 25, 2023

Update on Physical Distancing Requirements

The ID/IPC COVID-19 Committee has reviewed the current physical distancing requirements and after careful consideration, recommends the following guidance to protect health care workers, patients and public.

- Maintain two-metre-physical distancing between patients in the Emergency Department and Ambulatory Care Services for patients who fail screening.
- Maintain one-metre-physical distancing between patients in all waiting areas given that continuous masking has been discontinued.
- Maintain physical distancing as part of employee work isolation.
- Physical distancing will be optional:
 - in breakrooms and cafeterias
 - in Alternate Level of Care / Transitional Care Units
 - in meeting rooms/auditoriums and elevators
- Physical distancing will no longer be required in dining and recreational areas in long-term care facilities.

Update on COVID-19 Pre-op Testing of Asymptomatic Patients

The ID/IPC COVID-19 Committee was asked to review the requirement for preoperative COVID-19 testing of asymptomatic patients who meet exposure criteria. Based on the review of the preoperative COVID-19 testing results for the past three months and the key points outlined below, the preoperative requirement to test asymptomatic patients who meet exposure criteria for COVID-19 will be discontinued. Only symptomatic patients will be tested for COVID-19 prior to surgery.

- Risk mitigation measures are in place to manage asymptomatic patients who meet exposure criteria.
- Recent published data indicates that asymptomatic COVID-19 positive persons undergoing surgery have low morbidity and mortality rates as compared to symptomatic patients.
- Test results of asymptomatic COVID-19 positive persons are often difficult to interpret based on CT value.
- When asymptomatic patients with exposures test positive, surgeries are often cancelled resulting in unused OR times that may not be filled by another patient.

The following IPC guidance documents have been revised to reflect this update:

[COVID-19 Testing Algorithm - May 19 2023](#)

[IPC Guidance Operating Room Theatres and OR Decision Pathway - All Phases - May 19 2023](#)

Please visit the [IPC Resources COVID-19 Skyline page](#) for COVID-19 information.