

# Bulletin #176: COVID-19 Information

Oct. 14, 2021



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### COVID-19 Bulletin



#### [Interim COVID-19 vaccination and testing guidelines for Designated Support Persons](#)

Effective Oct. 18 to Nov. 19, 2021

**Designated Support Persons (DSPs) for eligible inpatients and outpatients will be required to be fully vaccinated by Nov. 19, 2021.**

A DSP is an active partner-in-care who provides physical and emotional support to patients or clients and are different from a general or social visitor.

This deferred implementation date will provide unvaccinated DSPs an opportunity to become fully vaccinated. These measures are required for the safety of our vulnerable patients / clients, employees, and physicians.

From Monday, Oct. 18 until Nov. 19, please follow the [Interim DSP COVID-19 Vaccination / Testing Guidelines](#) for Inpatient and Outpatient / Emergency Department.

These guidelines require all DSPs to be fully vaccinated and show proof of vaccination. DSPs must pass screening prior to entering a Horizon facility.

If the DSP is not fully vaccinated, the eligible patient will be asked to appoint an alternate DSP who is fully vaccinated. In circumstances where an alternate fully vaccinated DSP is not available, COVID-19 testing requirements will be implemented as outlined in the [Interim DSP COVID-19 Vaccination / Testing Guidelines](#).

Unvaccinated DSPs are encouraged to book a vaccination appointment. Information can be found on Horizon's vaccination clinic [webpage](#) or by calling 1-833-437-1424.

The [Interim DSP COVID-19 Vaccination / Testing Guidelines](#) identifies inpatient and outpatient populations eligible for a DSP, number of permitted designated DSPs, vaccination

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requirements, exceptions and the management of these exceptions through COVID-19 testing requirements, and a quick reference table.

For further information about the program, please refer to the [Provincial Regional Health Authority DSP Guiding Principles](#) and [Horizon DSP Operational Plan](#).

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



### **Revision of IPC guidance documents**

#### **New:** [IPC Guidance Management of Patient Exposures to COVID-19](#)

IPC guidelines for the management of patient exposures to COVID-19 was developed to ensure the safety of patients and healthcare workers when an outbreak has not been declared. The document provided guidance on the following processes:

- Management of HCWs exposed to a COVID-19 positive Healthcare Worker (HCW)/Patient
- Management of Patients exposed to a COVID-19 positive Healthcare Worker (HCW)/Patient
- Patient Placement
- COVID-19 Testing
- Additional IPC Measures



#### **Revised:** [Outbreak Management of Coronavirus Disease \(COVID-19\)](#)

The IPC guidance document on Outbreak Management of Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) was revised to clarify patient management, isolation requirements and HCW / volunteer / Student and Visitor restrictions. The document includes details on post exposure testing protocols and the disclosure process for notification of inpatients/substitute decision maker of the exposure situation and of testing requirements.

#### **Revised:** [Infection Prevention & Control Guidance: Operating Room Theatres and OR Decision Pathway for Horizon Facilities in a Red Phase](#)

Revisions made to the OR Decision Pathway for facilities in a Red Phase include the following:

- Routine PCR testing is not recommended for screening asymptomatic fully vaccinated patients with no risk factors due to the high uptake of COVID-19 vaccine in New Brunswick.
- Obtain COVID-19 swab for patients who meet the following testing criteria: those who are symptomatic, those who are not fully vaccinated, those with close contact with a known case/travel from a higher risk area, and/or those from a facility cluster.

The preoperative instructions, including the testing criteria for COVID-19 swabs remain the same as per the Operating Room Theatres and OR Decision Pathway for Horizon Facilities in an Orange Phase.

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**Revised:** [Ambulatory Care/Outpatient Services During COVID-19 - All Phases](#) and [Gastroenterology Endoscopy Units During COVID-19 - All Phases](#)

The requirement to complete a pre-procedure COVID-19 screening questionnaire within 72 hrs of procedure when appointments are booked has been removed from these guidance documents.

**Revised:** [IPC Guidance: Continuous Use of Medical Grade Face Masks and Eye Protection for Full Shifts in Healthcare Settings During COVID-19 Pandemic – All Phases](#)

Revisions were made to the IPC Guidance for the Continuous Use of Medical Grade Face Masks and Eye Protection to include the following:

## Red Phase

- All HCWs working in high-risk clinical settings (i.e. COVID-19 units, ERs, All ICUs, ORs, and COVID-19 Assessment Centres) will wear facial protection (medical grade face mask and eye protection (goggles/face shield) continuously, at all times when providing patient care as well as when providing indirect patient care, while in patient room such as meal delivery and environmental services when a physical barrier (i.e., plexiglass) is not in place to prevent transmission of droplets.
- All HCWs working in non-high risk clinical settings will wear facial protection (medical grade face mask and eye protection (safety glasses) continuously, at all times when providing patient care as well as when providing indirect patient care, while in patient room



such as meal delivery and environmental services when a physical barrier (i.e., plexiglass) is not in place to prevent transmission of droplets.

- The continuous use of eye protection (Safety Glasses) is optional for HCWs working in non-clinical settings.

## Outbreak Facility / Unit

All HCWs working in high-risk clinical settings in an outbreak facility (i.e. COVID-19 units, ERs, All ICUs, ORs, and COVID-19 Assessment Centres) will wear facial protection (medical grade face mask and eye protection (goggles/face shield) continuously, at all times in all areas of their workplace when a physical barrier (i.e., plexiglass) is not in place to prevent transmission of droplets.

- All HCWs working in an outbreak unit will wear facial protection (medical grade face mask and eye protection (goggles/face shield) continuously, at all times in all areas of their workplace when a physical barrier (i.e., plexiglass) is not in place to prevent transmission of droplets.
- All HCWs working in non-high risk clinical settings and non-clinical settings in an outbreak facility will wear facial protection (medical grade face mask and eye protection (safety glasses) continuously, at all times in all areas of their workplace when a physical barrier (i.e., plexiglass) is not in place to prevent transmission of droplets.

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## **On hold: IPC Guidance Hair Salons, Barber and Hairstylist Services**

These services were approved only for the Yellow Phase and are suspended in Orange and Red Phases.

## **On hold: Inpatient Passes/Leave of Absences During COVID-19, General Visitations and Volunteer Services.**

These services are suspended in Red Phase.

## **No revision: IPC Guidance and Requirements**

No changes required during the Red Phase for the following:

- Healthcare Workers Passive Screening
- Delivery of Electroconvulsive Therapy During COVID-19
- Physical Distancing in Waiting Rooms, in Cafeterias/ Departmental Lunchrooms, and in meeting rooms/amphitheatres
- DSP program will continue in accordance with the revised DSP Guidelines and in alignment with the IPC Guidance for compassionate visitation.

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

### **Red Phase questions and answers**

As previously communicated, all Horizon hospitals and health care facilities have returned to Red alert level protocols as of Wednesday, Oct. 13. Click [here](#) to read the full memo.



Below are some questions and answers staff and physicians may find helpful:

**Q.** Can health care workers (HCWs) travel outside of their zones?

**A.** No, HCWs should not travel outside their zones except for essential reasons (provision of health care duties, childcare – outlined as per [GNB mandatory order](#)). This applies to all HCWs regardless of the lockdown areas.

**Q.** Will this Red Phase be undertaken as a 'modified' Red Phase?

**A.** All Infection, Prevention and Control (IPC) guidance documents will refer to Red Phase. Guidance documents will be revised as needed based on level of COVID-19 activity during the Red Phase, and vaccination status is considered. The term 'modified' red will not be used.

**Q.** When booking for Ambulatory Care and Outpatients departments, will staff return to screening patients over the phone, or will they just be screened at the door?

**A.** There will be no requirement for screening by booking departments prior to appointments and clinic visits. The Ambulatory Care / Outpatient guideline document has been revised. Screening at the door will continue.

**Q.** Will screening at the door be different for patients who are vaccinated vs. unvaccinated?

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**A.** The process for screening patients will remain the same as during the Orange Phase. Vaccination status of patients will not be requested.

**Q.** Will active screening for staff and physicians be required?

**A.** No, active screening will not be required at this time. Self-screening will continue for HCWs. Screening questions for staff and physicians are available [here](#).

Remember, if you answer yes to any question, don't enter the facility. Please call Employee Health at 1-833-978-2580 for possible referral to a COVID-19 assessment centre. Referrals through Employee Health for Horizon employees are prioritized by the assessment centre.

**Q.** Should travel be reduced or postponed for HCWs who are required to travel to other clinics to provide patient care (IWK, other travel clinics)?

**A.** No, all HCWs who are taking part in these types of clinics should be fully vaccinated and can travel.

### **Vaccination status added to Horizon nursing admission forms**

Please be advised that COVID-19 vaccination status questions have been added to all Horizon Nursing Admission forms (paper / electronic) as a recommendation by the Infectious Disease Infection Prevention Control (ID-IPC) COVID-19 Committee.



As a result, this update has been implemented to the:

- [Inpatient Nursing Admission Assessment and Patient Centered Care Plan Medical Surgical form HHN-0856 \(08/21\)](#)
- Allscripts electronic records in the Saint John area
- Meditech systems in Moncton, Fredericton, Upper River Valley, and Miramichi areas

Kindly review and update the paper admission forms on your nursing units to the latest version which includes the COVID-19 vaccination status questions.

### **Units 4200 and 5600 closed to admissions, transfers, unnecessary foot traffic due to COVID-19 outbreaks**

*This is an abbreviated memo that was shared with the Moncton area on Wednesday, Oct. 13, 2021.*

Units 4200 and 5600 at Horizon's The Moncton Hospital are temporarily closed to admissions and transfers until further notice due to COVID-19 outbreaks on these units.

During this time, no patients will be admitted or transferred, and patients are restricted to their rooms. Unit staff are following enhanced IPC guidelines. Foot traffic to these units will be limited to essential services, such as food services.

Affected patients and staff have been tested.

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As well, our Designated Support Person (DSP) program will be temporarily suspended on these units. All DSPs are being notified by unit staff. The temporary suspension of the DSP program on Unit 5200, announced Sept. 27, continues to be in effect.

A reminder that all health care workers must continue to self-screen before entering a Horizon facility, wear a medical grade face mask at all times, practice hand hygiene and adhere to 2 metres (6 feet) physical distancing in break/lunch rooms and in the cafeteria.

Thank you to all unit staff for their quick response to these outbreaks and thank you all for your continued support.



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