

Bulletin #189: COVID-19 Information

Jan. 6, 2022



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COVID-19 Bulletin



[Important Update: Employee Health Testing & Isolation Guidelines](#)

It has been several days since we launched our new [Testing & Isolation Skyline Resource Page](#). We want to thank all of you for the feedback and questions related to this new process because it has provided us valuable information to refine and simplify our guidelines.

Additionally, the Department of Health released new information to the public that we wanted to review and determine if it impacted any of our recommendations.

Please note: You will note there may be differences between the advice of Public Health and the advice of Employee Health. As always, we continue to consider that we serve a vulnerable population and that is taken into consideration in the formation of our guidelines.

Testing & Isolation Guidelines

Please review the guidelines today as several changes have been made in response to the questions we have received. We have removed several scenarios and streamlined the direction to assist you and your manager in making decisions. Additionally, we will be updating our Q&A to respond to the most frequently asked questions.

There are three strategies; it is our goal to follow the **conventional strategy**. This is the document you should always refer to and it is on our new [Testing & Isolation Skyline Resource Page](#).

The use of the other two strategies, **contingency** and **crisis**, will be determined at the local area leadership, not Employee Health. This will be decided based on how much stress a unit, department, facility, or area is experiencing. They are published for your awareness. **Local area leadership will inform their managers about what level of strategy is being used.**

Testing

Point of Care Tests (POCT) are being distributed to managers this week. They will provide POCT to employees as needed per our guidelines OR in an outbreak scenario. We will not be doing serial testing three times as previously directed.

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Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) is available to all health care workers (HCWs) with priority access at assessment centres. If the guidelines indicate you require a PCR, [please schedule your appointment](#) and be sure to indicate you are a HCW at regional health authority (RHA) on your request.

Education Sessions

Education sessions to answer questions and provide assistance will be daily for the next two weeks beginning Jan. 10 and ending Jan. 21 at 12 p.m. each day. Please refer to the [Testing & Isolation Skyline Resource Page](#) for links.

Additional Support for Managers

We will be assigning designated support staff for each area for managers to consult with one on one in making decisions. This will be launched tomorrow and a memo with additional information will be provided to managers.

Access to guidelines outside the workplace

Guidelines are only available on Skyline. For access to Skyline outside the workplace, visit our [Employee Access page](#) on our public website (horizonnb.ca) for links and instructions.

We are all in this together! We want you to be safe, well and caring for our patients. Thank you for your cooperation as we navigate this new significant change in the way we manage COVID-19 with our employees.

Thank you from Employee Health

Our entire team would like to thank you for your patience and

kindness during this time. We are refocusing our expert nurses on planning for exposures & outbreaks as well as supporting COVID-19 positive staff. We want you all to stay safe and be well!

Reminder of the Importance of IPC Precautions

The following letter is from Dr. Gordon Dow Regional Infectious Diseases Medical Director

Dear colleagues,

As you are aware, multiple Horizon facilities are currently contending with an unprecedented number of COVID-19 exposures and nosocomial outbreaks on patient care units.

These outbreaks are associated with increased patient morbidity and mortality, prolonged length of stay, increased caregiver burden and reduction in our ability to deliver core services.

As per all health care associated infections, many of these are preventable. We are currently 20 months into this pandemic and are now challenged as a province with the second highest incidence of COVID-19 in Canada.

COVID-19 transmission to health care workers is therefore increased both in the community and the hospital setting. Caregiver fatigue and complacency are predictable outcomes under these challenging conditions, leading to an erosion of best infection prevention and control (IPC) practices.

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Given this reality, I would like to encourage all of you to follow public health guidance in the community while maintaining a high level of diligence in practicing infection control precautions at work. These practices while at work include:

1. Performing hand hygiene before and after all patient interactions.
2. Wearing a mask appropriately at all times within our facilities unless eating or drinking.
3. Eating and drinking should be performed only in designated areas, with appropriate physical distancing and attention to room capacity limits. Please don your mask immediately after consuming food and drink.
4. Eye protection must be used during all patient care activities and is required continuously while working on outbreak units.
5. Perform a point of care risk assessment to determine optimal personal protective equipment before every patient interaction.
6. Please feel free to book a PPE refresher as needed through IPC.

Practicing excellent infection control procedures is a form of self-care, which protects you, your family, your patients and your colleagues. Please also remember to similarly practice good self-care during your non-work hours, so that you can enjoy life at your full potential even during a pandemic.

Thank you again for the daily work you perform to maintain a culture of excellence at Horizon.



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