

# NH Emergency Department Regional Response Guideline for Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19): VERSION 4

## TRIAGE / RECEPTION

### Screening Criteria for All Patients:

Cold, Influenza or COVID-19 like symptoms, however mild, including:  
fever, chills, cough, shortness of breath, sore throat, odynophagia (painful swallowing), nasal congestion, rhinorrhea (runny nose), loss of sense of smell, headache, muscle aches, fatigue, or loss of appetite

#### High Risk Screen

1. Stop further triage assessment, including vital signs
2. Inform patient of requirements for isolation precautions
3. Have patient don a surgical mask and use hand sanitizer
4. Nurse triaging to don PPE: gloves, gown, mask, eye protection/face shield
5. Immediately inform Charge Nurse and ER Physician

#### Low Risk Screen

Low risk of COVID-19:  
Follow routine ER triage process and [PPE requirements](#) in ED until patient is assessed by the ER physician

#### Stable Patient (Unlikely admission)

*\*See Testing Guidelines Below*

YES

1. Nurse triaging escorts patient to designated assessment room (no shared room) <sup>a</sup>
2. Where staff available, assigned nurse remains with patient as primary nurse; Charge nurse reassigns responsibilities until relief available; minimize traffic into room
3. Place patient on Contact / Droplet precautions (*post signage*)
4. If discharged, escort patient through alternate route where available; not through waiting area
5. Ensure patient receives Handout '[Self-Isolation after a COVID-19 Test](#)' <sup>d</sup>

NO

#### Moderately ill Patient (Potential for admission)

*\*Testing if needing admission*

YES

#### As above, including the following:

1. Maintain strict Contact / Droplet precautions
2. Use minimal complement of ED personnel
3. All equipment brought into patient room must remain until terminally cleaned <sup>a</sup>
4. Use N95 for all aerosol-generating medical procedures; strongly discourage use of nebulized medications e.g. Ventolin <sup>b</sup>
5. Prepare for possible admission with early notification to pre-determined ward/unit

NO

#### Critically ill Patient (Need for resuscitation)

*\*Testing if needing admission*

YES

#### As above, including the following:

1. Immediately move patient to appropriate resuscitation room and maintain closed door
2. Use minimal complement of ED personnel and equipment in room as possible
3. Maintain strict Contact / Droplet precautions with terminal cleaning of equipment leaving room
4. Use N95 for all aerosol-generating procedures, including intubation and CPR <sup>b</sup>
5. Early notification of PTN for all transfers requiring higher level of care
6. For management of major trauma patients, refer to the [Regional Trauma Team Resuscitation Algorithm](#)

#### \*Guidance for COVID-19 Testing:

1. Test all individuals with new respiratory or systemic symptoms compatible with COVID-19, however mild
2. Individuals to be prioritized for testing:
  - Residents and staff of long term care facilities
  - Patients requiring hospitalization, or likely to be admitted (i.e. pregnant 3<sup>rd</sup> trimester, hemodialysis patients, or those receiving radiation or chemotherapy)
  - Health care workers
  - Essential service providers (i.e. first responders)
  - Residents of remote, isolated communities
  - People living/working in congregate settings (i.e. work camps, group homes, correctional facilities)
  - Homeless or those with unstable housing
  - Those with higher probability of infection (i.e. contact with known cases, returning traveller to Canada)
  - Part of investigation of a cluster or outbreak
3. Health Care Providers can test based on clinical judgement

*Testing not recommended for those without symptoms*

- Call PTN 1-866-233-2337 and state "Suspected COVID-19"

**GOAL:** to facilitate early movement of patient if possible

Refer to the [NH Transfer Algorithm](#) & [Transport Pathways](#)

# NH Emergency Department Regional Response Guiding Principles for Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19): VERSION 4

## SCREENING & ASSESSMENT

- **Display NH approved poster at patient ED Entrances** with instructions for anyone with respiratory symptoms to identify themselves immediately to staff ([‘Facility Entry Reception Poster’ on OurNH](#))
- All patients presenting to ED must be registered and assessed and not refused entrance to the ED
- **Screen ALL patients** presenting to ED for COVID-19 using screening criteria
- Have **Designated Route of Movement** for positive screened patients to designated assessment area (i.e. Triage to ED assessment room, ED to diagnostics/ward/unit, discharge route from ED/ward to outside; ensure movement route is clear of people and equipment prior to moving patient)
- <sup>d</sup> Give patient handout [‘Self-Isolation after a COVID-19 Test’](#) – found on BCCDC website

## PHYSICAL DISTANCING

- Immediately upon positive screening, place patient in **Designated Assessment Area** (see below for specifics) <sup>a</sup>  
**GOAL:** Rapid Isolation of Patient To Reduce Risk of Transmission
  - Implement physical distancing away from potentially infectious patients
  - Minimize patient movement including not sending into a waiting room or back to vehicle
  - Minimize traffic/visitors into patient room, including family and friends
  - Post “In and Out” Sign In Sheet on door to track all contact with patient while in ED
  - If patient discharged, have them escorted via alternate route (not through main waiting area if possible)

## DESIGNATED ASSESSMENT AREA <sup>a</sup>

- **Designated Assessment Room to be pre-determined by all NH Emergency Department Site Leadership and communicated to staff and physicians.**
  - A. For stable and/or moderately ill patients, designate single-bed, closed room with dedicated washroom if possible, with closed door to hallway. If no single-room option, apply a 2-metre separation between beds with privacy curtains closed; do not share items between patients
  - B. For critically ill patients, designate Resuscitation Bay most distant from other patients
- For all **Designated Assessment Rooms:**
  - If possible, use room with 100% cleanable surfaces only (i.e. no carpet, etc.)
  - Remove all non-essential equipment and furniture from rooms to minimize contamination
  - Stethoscopes and other frequently used equipment to be left in designated room
  - Chart, pens and wireless phones are prohibited in designated room
  - Any equipment removed from room must be disinfected using a hospital-approved disinfectant
  - Room / Resuscitation Bay to be immediately terminally cleaned upon patient discharge

## \*TESTING AND LABORATORY

- Collect only one (1) swab, preferably a nasopharyngeal swab:
  - Use viral culture swab (red or blue top) OR Aptima swab (white label)
  - Add patient grouping / priority in RED to ALL Lab requisitions and samples

### To prioritize testing, label in RED type of patient tested:

- **HOS** - hospitalized or immunocompromised
- **CMM** - community or outpatient, and urgent & primary care centre
- **HCW1** - health care worker - direct care
- **HCW2** - health care worker - indirect care
- **LTC** - long term care facility
- **OBK** - outbreak
- **CGT** - congregate settings (camps, correctional facilities, shelters)

## ADDITIONAL PRECAUTIONS

- Ensure up-to-date PPE training for all Emergency Department staff
- Stop all food and drink in the clinical ED area
- Have alcohol-based hand rubs (60-90% alcohol) available as ED entrance and around assessment areas
- <sup>b</sup> Additional precautions including N95 respirators with eye protections must be worn during aerosol-generating medical procedures (i.e. open suctioning of respiratory tract, intubation, bronchoscopy, CPR)

## RESOURCES

- For questions, contact Communicable Disease Team: 1-855-565-2990 or [CentralCDHUB@northernhealth.ca](mailto:CentralCDHUB@northernhealth.ca) from 8:30am to 4:30pm Monday to Friday. After hours, NH MHO on-call 250-565-2000, press 7 for Switchboard
- If suspected Health Care Worker exposure, call Provincial Workplace Centre at 1-866-922-9464
- Contact your Infection Control Professional as needed

Resources available on OurNH under ‘COVID-19’

