

Date:	May 8, 2020
To:	Northern Health Clinical Leadership, OR Staff, Anaesthetists and Surgeons
From:	Penny Anguish, NI COO and NH EOC Operational Lead Dr Ronald Chapman, VP Medicine Beth Ann Derksen, Executive Lead, Critical Care Service Network Dr. MJ Slabbert, Medical Lead, Critical Care Service Network
CC:	Angela De Smit, NE COO; Ciro Panessa, NW COO; Northern Health Medical Directors; Kim Ewen, Executive Lead, Surgery Program, Dr. Jim Dunfield, Medical Lead, Surgery Program; NH EOC
Re:	COVID-19 Response - Regional Guidelines for Anesthesia and Provincial Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) Protocol for Surgical Procedures During COVID-19

As the COVID-19 situation evolves, and with less hospital inpatient admissions than anticipated, establishing 'new normal' routines for surgical services is necessary. Given airway manipulation, including intubation and manual ventilation during general anesthesia, constitute aerosol generating medical procedures (AGMPs), broad consultation occurred to develop specific [guidelines for anesthesia](#) in Northern Health facilities. This document is well aligned with the final [Provincial IPC Protocol for Surgical Procedures During COVID-19](#).

The guidelines balance the risk of spread of infectious disease with our duty to provide safe, quality surgical service to patients, including obstetrics, based on risk assessment.

Low risk patients - this group includes patients with:

- 1) No symptoms of cough, fever, respiratory distress or malaise
- 2) No infectious contacts
- 3) Not self-isolating
- 4) No confirmed or pending COVID-19 swab result and coming from an area of low community transmission or prevalence

Highest risk patients – this group includes patients with:

- 1) Positive test for COVID-19
- 2) Symptoms consistent with infection and/or those with a known positive contact
- 3) Under investigation (PUI) for COVID-19

Appropriate use of fitted respirators is key to staff and physician safety. Examples of respirators used in health care facilities are tight fitting N95 and reusable Elastomeric and the loose fitting Powered Air Purifying Respirator (PAPR).

Key instructions for fitted respirator use:

- When a fitted respirator is indicated for use, N95 (or alternative disposable) respirators are doffed between cases and must not be reused
- Used N95s should be placed in the purple bag on the unit for reprocessing unless the respirator is visibly soiled
- Makeup should not be worn when using a N95 as this soils the respirator
- Elastomeric and PAPR respirators can be reused after doffing as long as proper cleaning protocol is followed between usage

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