COVID-19 Toolkit – Family/Primary Support Person(s) and Family Caregivers
Nova Scotia Health respects the need and right for patients to have family involved in their care. Family/primary support persons and family caregivers are partners in care, helping to ensure quality and safety for patients. Your presence and support may be required for outpatient visits or inpatient stays.

We have created this guide to make sure you have the information you need to stay safe and to protect and care for your family member. This includes information about infection prevention and control, and public health measures that must be followed while in the facility. These measures will help our patients, residents, staff, and other caregivers remain healthy. You may receive training and education at your facility and learn specific procedures needed during your visit. This guide is designed to be used as part of your education and training and as a reference if you forget any of the information provided.

Please ask us any questions you may have at any time. We also welcome your feedback and advice about the contents of this guide and the education and training you will receive. Our goal is to provide the best care and support we can to you and your family member. Thank you and welcome back.
Screening for symptoms

Symptoms of COVID-19 can vary from person to person and in different age groups. Symptoms can take up to 14 days to appear after an exposure. We ask that you closely watch your health daily. If you are feeling unwell and are having any of the following symptoms, you must not come to the facility.

In the past 48 hours (2 days) have you had, or are you currently experiencing:

› Fever (chills or sweats) OR cough (new or worsening)

OR

2 or more of the following symptoms (new or worsening):

› Sore throat
› Runny nose/nasal congestion
› Headache
› Shortness of breath

On entrance to the facility, you will be asked about these symptoms, your travel history, and any contact with an individual suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19. Please answer these questions honestly to help keep everyone healthy and well.

If you develop a fever or 2 or more of the symptoms above, either before or following a visit, please contact 811 to determine if you need to be assessed for COVID-19 testing. Please notify the nursing unit if you develop symptoms and have been in the facility.

Hand hygiene (cleaning your hands)

Wash or sanitize your hands often. This prevents the spread of germs through our hands. Cleaning our hands is the number one way to stop the spread of germs in health care settings, the community, and at home. We all have a role to play.

There are 2 ways to clean your hands:

1. Hand washing with soap and water
   This should be used when your hands look dirty, after you use the washroom, and before preparing food.

2. Alcohol-based hand rub (hand sanitizer)
   This method can be used most of the time during your visit and is readily available in the facility.
We ask that you use the alcohol-based hand rub often during your stay, including:

› when you arrive to the facility and before entering the patient/clinic room.
› before helping your loved one to eat or handling their meal tray.
› before and after helping with their care.
› when you leave the patient/clinic room.
› any time you feel you should.

How to clean your hands with sanitizer (alcohol-based hand rub) (see page 9)

How to wash your hands with soap and water (see page 10)

Mask use
Due to public health directives, wearing a mask is mandatory in most indoor public places, including health care facilities. There has been mandatory mask use by staff in long-term care facilities, hospitals, and clinics since the spring of 2020.

You may wear a non-medical (cloth) mask into the facility. Once you have been through the screening process, you may be provided with a medical mask (also called a procedure mask) to wear during your time in the facility. A mask must cover your mouth and nose at all times.

Face shields cannot be worn instead of a non-medical mask. The face shield protects the wearer’s eyes but it does not protect other people if the wearer coughs or sneezes.

If your medical mask becomes dirty or wet, please let the staff know. It may be necessary to replace it with a new mask.
How to wear a medical or procedure mask (see page 11)

There is a safe way to put on and take off a non-medical mask and how to store when not in use (see page 12).

Medical mask do’s and don’ts (see page 13)

Physical distancing
To protect yourself and others from COVID-19 and other respiratory illnesses, you need to stay 2 meters (6 feet) away from other people as much as possible. If you and another person stretch your arms out and there is a gap between your fingers and theirs, there is approximately 6 feet between you.

Unless you are providing care or help to the patient, we ask that you try to keep physical distance. For example, if you are sitting in a chair, try to sit a few arm lengths away. Evidence shows that spending more time in close contact with others increases the risk of spreading viruses, such as COVID-19.

There are limits as to how many people can be on an elevator at the same time to allow for physical distancing. This will vary depending on the facility and size of the elevator. Signs on the elevator or outside of it will tell you how many people are allowed on at a time.

Contact with other patients
We recognize you may know other patients admitted in the facility or here for a clinic appointment and would like to check in on them. We ask that you not have any contact with other patients during your visit to limit their contact with community members.

Please stay in the patient’s room/clinic room during your time in the facility unless you are using the public restroom or have made arrangements with the health care team. You must not use the patient bathroom for safety reasons.
Cough and sneeze etiquette
These steps reduce the risk of spreading germs if a person coughs or sneezes:
• Cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue.
• Throw the used tissue in the garbage and clean your hands.
• If you do not have a tissue, cough and sneeze into your elbow/sleeve, not your hand.
• Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth, as this is where germs can enter.
• Clean your hands before touching your face.

Tips on cough and sneeze etiquette (see page 14)

Public health measures – social contacts
As a family/primary support person(s) or family caregiver, your social contacts will also become your loved one’s social contacts. Due to current public health direction, to protect yourself and others you need to:
• Keep your close social group of 10 to consistent people as much as possible.
• Make informed choices about who and how to interact with each other (consider age, their occupation (job), and health conditions).
• Avoid public gatherings above gathering limits.
• Avoid non-essential travel outside of Atlantic Canada (Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, and Newfoundland and Labrador). If you do travel outside of the Atlantic Bubble, you will need to self-isolate for 14 days after returning.
• Avoid public spaces where there are a lot of people.

For other ways to protect yourself and your community, please visit the Nova Scotia Government’s Coronavirus (COVID-19) webpage:
› https://novascotia.ca/coronavirus/
Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Mandatory use of masks during your stay has been explained above. The only piece of PPE you may need during your visit, other than your mask, is gloves. You should wear gloves if you are going to come into contact with anything that may make your hands dirty (such as providing help in the washroom). You should clean your hands before you put them on and after taking them off. Throw away used gloves in the garbage.

If other pieces of PPE are needed for your visit, such as a gown or eye/facial protection (goggles, visor, or face shield), you will be shown how to put on and remove these safely.

From time to time, more precautions are needed to keep germs, such as diarrhea or influenza, etc., from spreading from one patient to another. In these cases, gowns, gloves, masks, and eye/facial protection may be needed. If this is the case, staff will review how to properly put on and remove the necessary PPE. Below are resources for support person(s) and caregivers on how to put on and remove PPE.

**Putting on Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) – For Family, Support person(s) & Caregivers (see page 13)**

**Removing Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) – For Family, Support person(s) & Caregivers (see page 14)**
Good Hygiene Stops the Spread of Germs

How to Clean Your Hands with Sanitizer

1. Apply 1 to 2 pumps of alcohol-based hand sanitizer to palm of dry hands.

2. Rub palms of hands together.

3. Rub fingertips of each hand in opposite palm.

4. Rub in between and around fingers.

5. Rub the back of each hand with the palm of the other hand.

6. Rub each thumb with the other hand.

7. Rub hands until they are dry.

Do not use towel or paper towel.

If your hands look dirty, please use soap and water to wash them for at least 20 seconds.

For information visit novascotia.ca/coronavirus
Good Hygiene Stops the Spread of Germs

How to Wash Your Hands

1. Wet your hands with warm running water.
2. Add soap and scrub for 15-20 seconds.
3. Remember to get every part of both hands.
4. Rinse the soap off under running warm water.
5. Dry your hands with a clean towel.
6. Use the towel to turn off the tap.

When soap and water are not available, please use alcohol-based hand sanitizer and rub all parts of your hands for at least 15 seconds.

Updated May 28, 2020

For information visit: novascotia.ca/coronavirus
HOW TO WEAR A PROCEDURE MASK

1. Wash your hands with soap and water for 20-30 seconds or perform hand hygiene with alcohol-based hand rub before touching the face mask.

2. Check the new mask to make sure it’s not damaged.

3. Ensure colour side of the mask faces outward.

4. Locate the metallic strip. Place it over and mold it to the nose bridge.

5. Place an ear loop around each ear or tie the top and bottom straps.

6. Cover mouth and nose fully, making sure there are no gaps. Pull the bottom of the mask to fully open and fit under your chin.

7. Press the metallic strip again to fit the shape of the nose. Perform hand hygiene.

8. Do not touch the mask while using it. If you do, perform hand hygiene.

9. Replace the mask if it gets wet or dirty and wash your hands again after putting it on. Do not reuse the mask.

Removing the Mask

1. Perform hand hygiene.

2. Do not touch the front of your mask. Lean forward, gently remove the mask from behind by holding both ear loops or ties.

3. Discard the mask in a waste container.

4. Perform hand hygiene.

These materials were adopted with permission from the BCCDC and the British Columbia Ministry of Health.
NON-MEDICAL MASKS

Keeping each other safe is more important than ever. Wearing a non-medical mask is now mandatory in most indoor public places. Here’s how to safely wear and care for your non-medical, reusable mask.

Ensure the mask is made of at least two layers of tightly woven fabric.
Inspect the mask for tears or holes. Ensure mask is clean and dry.
Wash or sanitize your hands before and after touching the mask.
Use the ties or ear loops to put the mask over your mouth and nose.
The mask should fit snugly to the cheeks and cover your nose and mouth. There should be no gaps.

Avoid touching your face while wearing the mask.
Wash or sanitize your hands if you touch the mask and before and after removing the mask.
Remove the mask by the ties or ear loops. Avoid touching the front of the mask.
Store the mask in a clean place if wearing it again.
Wash the mask with hot, soapy water and let dry completely. Masks can be included with laundry.

Mask Don’ts
- Don’t reuse masks that are moist, dirty or damaged
- Don’t touch your mask while wearing it
- Don’t hang the mask from your neck or ears
- Don’t leave your used mask within reach of others
- Don’t wear a loose mask
- Don’t remove your mask to talk to someone
- Don’t share your mask
- Don’t wear a face shield instead of a mask

A mask alone cannot prevent the spread of COVID-19.

Be sure to:
- Stay home if you feel unwell
- Maintain physical distance as much as possible
- Wash or sanitize your hands often
- Use proper cough or sneeze etiquette
- Avoid touching your face, mouth, nose and eyes

novascotia.ca/coronavirus
Universal Masking at NSHA

Universal masking policy is in place to ensure the health and safety of all NSHA healthcare staff and physicians.

Be sure to follow these DO’s and DON’Ts to minimize transmission of infectious agents to yourself and to your colleagues.

DO!
- Perform hand hygiene before and after touching your mask
- Mask must cover your nose and mouth completely
- When not in use, place your mask on a clean paper towel, or in a clean, flat paper bag labelled with your name (ensure mask outward-facing surface folded on itself)

DON’T
- Touch the front of the mask! (Handle the mask by the ear loops or ties only)
- Wear your mask under your nose or chin at any time. (The mask should cover your nose and mouth)
- Hang your mask by your ear – this risks contamination

Last revised June 2020
Cough and Sneeze Etiquette

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Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue.

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Throw the used tissue in the garbage and wash your hands or use an alcohol-based hand rub immediately.

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If you don't have a tissue, cough and sneeze into your elbow, not your hand. Wash your hands or use an alcohol-based hand rub immediately.

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Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.

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If you need to touch your face, wash your hands first.

novascotia.ca/coronavirus
GUIDE TO PUTTING ON PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

For Family, Support Person(s) & Caregivers

1. Non-medical mask
   - A non-medical mask (or medical mask) may be worn at initial entry to long term-care facility
   - Mask must cover both the mouth & nose.

2. Hand Hygiene
   - Perform hand hygiene.
     - Alcohol-based hand rub is preferred.
     - Use soap and water if hands are visibly soiled.

3. Medical mask
   - For outdoor visits, visitors may wear a non-medical mask.
   - For indoor visits, all visitors & designated caregivers will be given a medical mask on arrival.
     - Secure ties or ear loops around head or ears.
     - Fit moldable band around the bridge of your nose.
     - Fit snugly to face over mouth and nose and below chin.
     - If no other PPE is needed, designated caregiver may proceed to the resident room.
     - If additional PPE is required, proceed to Step 4.

4. Long-sleeved gown
   - Make sure the gown covers from neck to knees to wrist.
   - Tie at back of neck and waist.

5. Face/Eye Protection
   - Several types of face/eye protection are available (e.g. mask with built-in visor, goggles, full face shield)
   - Place over the eyes or face & adjust to fit
   - NOTE: Eyeglasses are not considered protective eyewear.

6. Gloves
   - Put on gloves.
   - Pull the cuffs of gloves over the cuffs of the gown.
GUIDE TO REMOVING PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

For Family, Support Person(s) & Caregivers

1. Gloves
   - Use glove to glove, skin-to-skin technique.
   - Outside of gloves are contaminated.
   - Discard in garbage

2. Hand Hygiene
   - Perform hand hygiene.
   - Alcohol-based hand rub is preferred.
   - Use soap and water if hand are visibly soiled.

3. Long-sleeved Gown
   - Carefully unfasten ties.
   - Grasp the outside of the gown at the back by the shoulders and pull down over the arms.
   - Turn the gown inside out during removal.
   - Carefully fold into bundle. Do not rip off.
   - Place disposable gowns in garbage or place non-disposable gowns in laundry hamper.

4. Hand Hygiene
   - Perform hand hygiene.
   - Alcohol-based hand rub is preferred.
   - Use soap and water if hand are visibly soiled.

5. Face/Eye Protection
   - Handle only by headband or earpieces.
   - Carefully pull away from the face.
   - Place non-disposable goggles in designated area for disinfection & disposable items in waste receptacle.

6. Medical Mask
   - LEAVE MASK ON unless mask:
     1) is visibly soiled,
     2) makes direct contact with a resident, or
     3) integrity is affected by moisture / humidity.
   - If the mask must be removed, untie straps or remove ear loops without touching front of mask, allow to fall away from face & discard. Put on a new mask.

7. Perform Hand Hygiene

Developed by Infection Prevention & Control - October 2020
Nova Scotia Health Authority promotes a smoke-free, vape-free, and scent-free environment. Please do not use perfumed products. Thank you!

www.nshealth.ca

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The information in this brochure is for informational and educational purposes only. The information is not intended to be and does not constitute health care or medical advice. If you have any questions, please ask your health care provider.

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The information in this pamphlet is to be updated every 3 years or as needed.