

COVID-19 Toolkit – Family/Essential Care Partner(s) and Family Caregivers

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www.nshealth.ca

COVID-19 Toolkit – Family/Essential Care Partner(s) and Family Caregivers

Nova Scotia Health respects the need and right for patients to have family involved in their care. Family/Essential care partner(s) (primary support person(s) or caregivers) are our 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 guidelines 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 to you and your family member as COVID-19 becomes a part of everyday life. As the situation with COVID-19 changes over time, this guide will be updated.

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. **Do not visit if you are not feeling well or in the past 48 hours you have had a:**

- › New cough or chronic cough that is worsening **OR**
- › New fever (for example, chills or sweats) **OR**

Two or more of:

- › New or worsening shortness of breath
- › New loss of, or changes to your sense of smell or taste
- › New sore throat
- › New runny nose or nasal congestion or sneezing
- › New headache
- › New extreme fatigue or you are tired all the time
- › New gastrointestinal symptoms (such as nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea)

When you enter the facility, you will be asked:

- › Screening questions about the symptoms above.
- › If you have had any contact with a person suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19.

Please answer these questions honestly to help keep everyone healthy and well. If you develop a new or worsening cough **OR** new fever **OR** two or more of any of the symptoms above, visit the link below to determine if you need to be assessed for COVID-19 testing:

- › www.nshealth.ca/visit-covid-19-testing-site

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 or feel sticky, 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.

For steps to clean your hands with sanitizer (alcohol-based hand rub), see page 7.

For steps on good hygiene to stop the spread of germs, including how to wash your hands with soap and water, see page 8.

Mask use

Once you have been through the screening process, you will be given a **medical mask** (also called a procedure mask). **You must wear this mask at all times while in a Nova Scotia Health facility. The mask must cover your mouth and nose at all times. You need to clean your hands before and after putting your mask on, taking your mask off, or adjusting your mask.**

Face shields cannot be worn instead of a 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. **To learn how to wear a mask, see page 9.**

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.

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 washroom or have made arrangements with the health care team. **You must not use the patient washroom** for safety reasons. **Do not share food with patients during your visit.**

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.

For tips on cough and sneeze etiquette, see page 10.

Public Health guidelines

As a family member or essential care partner(s), your social contacts will also become your loved one's social contacts. It is important to follow the current guidelines provided by Public Health officials.

For more information, visit:

- › http://policy.nshealth.ca/Site_Published/covid19/document_render.aspx?documentRender.IdType=6&documentRender.GenericField=&documentRender.Id=95792

For other ways to protect yourself and your community, please visit the Nova Scotia Government's Coronavirus (COVID-19) webpage:

- › <https://novascotia.ca/coronavirus/avoiding-infection/>

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Mandatory use of masks during your stay has been explained above. 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.

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 essential care partner(s) on how to put on and remove PPE.

For steps for putting on Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) – For Family, Support person(s) & Essential Care Partners, see page 11.

For steps for removing Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) – For Family, Support person(s) & Essential Care Partners, see page 12.

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.



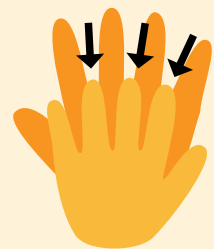
2

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.



Updated September 29, 2020



Good Hygiene Stops the Spread of Germs

Good respiratory hygiene

Cough or sneeze into a tissue (or your elbow) to cover your nose and mouth.

Throw away the used tissue in the garbage.

Clean your hands with soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

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 August 20, 2020



For information visit: novascotia.ca/coronavirus

How to Wear a Face 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 outwards.

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 Store the mask safely or discard appropriately.

4 Perform hand hygiene



Adapted from British Columbia Centre for Disease Control "How to Wear a Mask": http://www.bccdc.ca/Health-Professionals-Site/Documents/COVID19_SurgicalMaskPoster.pdf
 Updated December 29, 2021 by Infection Prevention and Control

Cough and Sneeze Etiquette



----- Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue.



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



----- 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.



----- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.



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

GUIDE TO PUTTING ON PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

For Family, Support Person(s) & Essential Care Partners

1

Medical Mask



- All visitors & essential care partners will be given a medical mask on arrival.
- Medical masks are required at all times while in a Nova Scotia health facility.
 - ✓ 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, the essential care partner may proceed to the patient's room.
 - ✓ If additional PPE is required, **proceed to Step 3**

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



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

4

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.

5

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) & Essential Care Partners

1

Gloves



- Outside of glove is contaminated.
- Use glove to glove, skin-to-skin technique.
- 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 gown in garbage or place non-disposable gown in laundry hamper.

4

Hand Hygiene



Perform hand hygiene.

Alcohol-based hand rub is preferred. Use soap and water if hands are visibly soiled.

5

Face/Eye Protection



- Handle only by headband or earpieces.
- Carefully pull away from the face.
- Place non-disposable face/eye protection in designated area for disinfection & disposable items in garbage.

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



*Nova Scotia Health 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.

