

Northern Ontario COVID-19 Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Update

As the province begins to open up and clinical practices open up as well, there are a lot of things to consider, including whether your office practice is well equipped to see patients who screen positive for COVID19.

All practices, whether specialist or primary care will need to be following the screening guidance when patients call for an appointment and then attend the clinic. The screening guidance recommended by the MOH is linked [here](#). This is being updated regularly and screening in your office will need to be updated as well.

In primary care there may be patients who screen positive for COVID19 and will need assessment for their symptoms as well as a swab. If your practice has PPE *and* a process for doing the swabs and getting them to the lab, then you might be able to see these patients for both assessment and management of symptoms as well as the swab in your setting.

Some of you might have PPE but no process for swabs. If you have adequate PPE, then those patients who have COVID19 symptoms (screen positive) can be seen, assessed and managed, and then sent to the assessment centre for a swab. Alternatively if the test turnaround time is quick in your community, AND if the patient can wait to have their symptoms assessed and managed, you might recommend having the patient swabbed first as a testing centre and then seeing them in a day or two in the office if their result is back and negative.

There will also be patients who need care for things other than COVID19 but might still screen positive. If their care is deferrable for a day or two (for example, for a prenatal appointment, or other routine care) then obtaining a swab before their in-person care would be appropriate.

Regardless, all patients seen in the community setting should be seen with PPE – mask and eye protection if they screen negative, and full PPE (including gown and gloves) if screen positive.

** At the present time, gowns are in extremely short supply. Re-usable cloth gowns can be used in the office setting, but it is recommended that used gowns (which are assumed to be contaminated) are NOT laundered in home laundry. (see guidance on Centre for Effective Practice page noted below)

While the content below is by no means exhaustive, we hope that these are some helpful links to support your work in your community settings as your clinical care increases:

1. First, for accessing PPE, all clinicians are expected to follow the usual purchasing pathways to access PPE. If you are not able to access any PPE and need urgent support, there is some supply through provincial pandemic supply. This can be accessed by providing your information in the link [here](#).

2. If you want to routinely purchase from the Bulk Rate Purchasing for PPE available through the OH North Regional Table supplies, see these links:

- A. [PPE Purchase Request Form](#)
- B. [PPE and Critical Supplies Available for Purchase Through the Regional Table](#)

Monitor your email in the coming days, from your OMA representative and OH North, for a link to an on-line application for a no charge PPE kit, through OH North.

3. IPAC has a [Technical briefing on PPE](#) use in ambulatory and outpatient settings which covers technical issues about PPE for staff, admin, physicians, etc. and issues in cleaning of spaces as practices “ramp up”.

4. The Centre for Effective Practice has several resources on PPE use on their website. This [link](#) will take you to the “what to wear, when” section of the site.

5. The OCFP has created a [simple two pager about PPE](#) in primary care settings. This is equally applicable to community specialist offices.

6. The OMA has summarized PPE guidance [here](#) for clinics and hospitals and will soon release a checklist on how to safely increase office based services.

7. McMaster Palliative Care has put together some summary guidance about [PPE for home visits](#) for those clinicians who are supporting palliative patients at home.

A webinar regarding PPE for home visits is here:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h34W7yozmWU>.

8. Health sector recovery guidance from the Ministry of Health is [here](#).

9. The SW region has put together a [helpful website](#) with a compilation of resources to support office reopening for all community clinicians.

10. Finally, OMA has a re-opening guide to assist you: <https://content.oma.org/wp-content/uploads/private/OMA-Preparing-to-Resume-In-Person-Care.pdf>

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