

COVID-19 FACT SHEET

Checklist for Clinics



STAYING OPERATIONAL DURING THE PANDEMIC

The following checklist offers advice for family medicine clinics during the **COVID-19** pandemic. This document is guidance; always seek [current public health advice](#). Community practices should review their practices to ensure they are taking the [appropriate precautions](#) to continue operating during the pandemic, including two key objectives:

- Minimize the risk of COVID-19 in your practice by following current advice in the checklist below, and
- Ensure your patients are aware that you are open and offering in-person and virtual visits to meet their needs.

CHECKLIST:

- Ensure your patients don't put their health on hold.** Reach out to patients to let them know you are open and remind them to stay on top of their medical concerns. We have [set up resources for physicians and clinics](#) to help get this word out.
- Be ready for patient calls.** Ensure your reception staff are screening patients who call in to ensure patients can be cared for in the appropriate setting at the appropriate time. As needed, consider scheduling appointment times for additional virtual triage. When the phone cannot be answered, use a voicemail message with clear instructions and monitor regularly.
- Offer virtual care.** Where clinically appropriate, offer virtual visits to patients via phone or video. This reduces traffic coming into your office while also helping to conserve PPE. Review our [Virtual Care Resources](#).
- Display Signage.** Posters on your door warns visitors with symptoms to take precautions. Download and print posters from [Shared Health](#).
- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).** Ensure PPE is available and utilized based on [current provincial requirements](#). Have procedure masks and sanitizer available for patients with symptoms, with controls to minimize theft. Review our [PPE resource page](#) to learn more about provincial guidelines and how to order PPE.
- Entry screening.** Reinforce patient screening on entry, directing visitors to the appropriate area and ensuring anyone with symptoms wears a mask and cleans their hands. If a separate waiting area and PPE are not available, patients should be screened while maintaining a 2-metre distance.
- Separate patients.** Patients with cold/flu symptoms and their escorts should be separated to avoid cohorting with asymptomatic patients.
- Implement social (physical) distancing.** This includes adjusting your waiting room and reception layout to spread people out. A 6-foot distance between individuals is recommended. Consider asking patients who travel by car to wait in their vehicles until called or texted. Consider alternating in-person and virtual care visits in the schedule to decrease volumes. Review: [Public Advice on social distancing](#)
[Advice for health facility staff on social distancing](#)
- Keep yourself, your staff, and your family well.** See our guide to [Stay Well During the Pandemic](#) for a checklist of tips. For physicians and staff who may be sick, follow the [current advice about from occupational health](#).
- Follow routine clinic cleaning protocols.** Regularly wipe down frequently touched common surfaces, such as door knobs and reception areas with [appropriate disinfectants](#). Clean patient exam rooms after visits. Follow [routine practices](#) and other [provincial infection prevention and control advice](#).
- Review clinic policies.** Consider waiving cancellation fees for patients with symptoms and not offering sick notes for cold/flu during the pandemic. Consider sending other sick notes by mail. These steps can reduce non-essential visits. Review [guidance regarding sick notes and medical notes](#).
- Stay up to date.** Experts are learning more every day and public health advice and protocols are changing frequently. Visit [our COVID resource site for physicians](#) or [Shared Health resources](#) for current advice.

Patients who meet the screening criteria for COVID-19 should be sent for assessment. [Learn more.](#)