



# OFFICE-BASED PRIMARY CARE: SAFETY FOR YOUR PATIENTS, YOUR STAFF, AND YOURSELF

Webinar date: **May 14, 2020**

Recording: <https://ubccpd.ca/office-based-primary-care-safety-your-patients-your-staff-and-yourself>

Slides: <https://ubccpd.ca/sites/ubccpd.ca/files/COVID-19-Webinar-Slides-May-14.pdf>

**Disclaimer:** Information on COVID-19 is changing rapidly and much of the research is preliminary. Assessment and management protocols are suggestions only; they do not take the place of clinical judgement. Please check with your own health authorities and local medical health officers as policies and support for the suggested approaches to patient care may vary between regions.

## Q&A Not Addressed During Webinar

**Q: If I am seeing patients in person do I need to wear a protective gown? What is a safe "lifespan" of the mask and the gown?**

**A:** Please refer to:

- BCCDC IPC Guidance for Community-Based Physicians, Nursing Professionals and Midwives in Clinic Settings: [http://www.bccdc.ca/Health-Professionals-Site/Documents/COVID19\\_IPCGuidanceCommunityBasedHCPsClinicSettings.pdf](http://www.bccdc.ca/Health-Professionals-Site/Documents/COVID19_IPCGuidanceCommunityBasedHCPsClinicSettings.pdf)
- BCCDC Cleaning and Disinfection Instructions for Eye/Facial Protection: [http://www.bccdc.ca/Health-Professionals-Site/Documents/COVID19\\_EyeFacialProtectionDisinfection.pdf](http://www.bccdc.ca/Health-Professionals-Site/Documents/COVID19_EyeFacialProtectionDisinfection.pdf)

**Q: What is the role of the health authorities when it comes to providing PPE to community doctors? What is the mechanism by which community doctors access PPE?**

**A:** Please refer to:

- BCCDC IPC Guidance for Community-Based Physicians, Nursing Professionals and Midwives in Clinic Settings: [http://www.bccdc.ca/Health-Professionals-Site/Documents/COVID19\\_IPCGuidanceCommunityBasedHCPsClinicSettings.pdf](http://www.bccdc.ca/Health-Professionals-Site/Documents/COVID19_IPCGuidanceCommunityBasedHCPsClinicSettings.pdf)
- CPSBC COVID-19 Updates for Physicians: [http://www.bccdc.ca/Health-Professionals-Site/Documents/COVID19\\_EyeFacialProtectionDisinfection.pdf](http://www.bccdc.ca/Health-Professionals-Site/Documents/COVID19_EyeFacialProtectionDisinfection.pdf)

**Q: If patients have no COVID-19 symptoms and are seen in the office, say for MSK injuries, does the clinic room need to be sanitized in between?**

**A:** Please refer to BCCDC IPC Guidance for Community-Based Physicians, Nursing Professionals and Midwives in Clinic Settings: [http://www.bccdc.ca/Health-Professionals-Site/Documents/COVID19\\_IPCGuidanceCommunityBasedHCPsClinicSettings.pdf](http://www.bccdc.ca/Health-Professionals-Site/Documents/COVID19_IPCGuidanceCommunityBasedHCPsClinicSettings.pdf)

**Q: Should we be screening all patients' temperature prior to entering the clinic?**

**A:** Temperature screening not recommended, for more information please refer to Point-of-care risk assessment (PCRA) for COVID-19 in the BCCDC IPC Guidance for Community-Based Physicians, Nursing Professionals and Midwives in Clinic Settings: [http://www.bccdc.ca/Health-Professionals-Site/Documents/COVID19\\_IPCGuidanceCommunityBasedHCPsClinicSettings.pdf](http://www.bccdc.ca/Health-Professionals-Site/Documents/COVID19_IPCGuidanceCommunityBasedHCPsClinicSettings.pdf)

**Q: Instead of reinventing the wheel, why not come up with one document for family physicians' offices for us all to follow. Would be greatly appreciated.**

**A:** Many documents including those from BCCDC, Doctors of BC, WorkSafeBC, CPSBC and the Divisions of Family Practice link to each other. For information that is specific to your profession refer to your College for updates/templates. A general template also available on the WorkSafeBC website: <https://www.worksafebc.com/en/resources/health-safety/checklist/covid-19-safety-plan?lang=en>.

**Q: Any guidelines for MDs at a clinic, socializing in the lunchroom, having meetings in close quarters after seeing patients in the clinic for non-essential issues?**

**A:** Physical distancing (limit number in room), regular hand hygiene should be maintained, and for more information refer to BCCDC IPC Guidance for Community-Based Physicians, Nursing Professionals and Midwives in Clinic Settings: [http://www.bccdc.ca/Health-Professionals-Site/Documents/COVID19\\_IPCGuidanceCommunityBasedHCPsClinicSettings.pdf](http://www.bccdc.ca/Health-Professionals-Site/Documents/COVID19_IPCGuidanceCommunityBasedHCPsClinicSettings.pdf)

**Q: Do the walls of the treatment room need to be cleaned in between appointments/patients?**

**A:** Floors and walls should be kept visibly clean and free of spills, dust and debris. These are potentially low touch surfaces depending on the room and could require daily cleaning.

For more information, please refer to:

- o BCCDC Environmental Cleaning and Disinfectants for Clinic Settings: [http://www.bccdc.ca/Health-Professionals-Site/Documents/COVID-19\\_MOH\\_BCCDC\\_EnvironmentalCleaning.pdf](http://www.bccdc.ca/Health-Professionals-Site/Documents/COVID-19_MOH_BCCDC_EnvironmentalCleaning.pdf)
- o BCCDC COVID-19 Informational Sheet for Environmental Service Providers in Health Care Settings: [http://www.bccdc.ca/Health-Info-Site/Documents/Environmental\\_Service\\_Providers\\_Health\\_Care.pdf](http://www.bccdc.ca/Health-Info-Site/Documents/Environmental_Service_Providers_Health_Care.pdf)

**Q: How do you clean a BP cuff?**

**A:** Hospital grade disinfectant (e.g. disinfectant wipes) should be used to disinfect smaller patient care equipment (e.g. BP cuffs, electronic thermometers, oximeters, stethoscope) after each use.

For more information, please refer to:

- Government of Canada Infection Prevention and Control for COVID-19:  
<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/health-professionals/infection-prevention-control-covid-19-second-interim-guidance.html#a12>
- BCCDC Environmental Cleaning and Disinfectants for Clinic Settings:  
[http://www.bccdc.ca/Health-Professionals-Site/Documents/COVID-19\\_MOH\\_BCCDC\\_EnvironmentalCleaning.pdf](http://www.bccdc.ca/Health-Professionals-Site/Documents/COVID-19_MOH_BCCDC_EnvironmentalCleaning.pdf)

**Q: Many family practices are unable to access PPE and there is no sign of it coming. What are we to do if a patient requires an exam and there is no PPE available?**

**A:** Please refer to your College’s guidance. For physicians, refer to CPSBC Guidance for Registrants:  
<https://www.cpsbc.ca/news/COVID-19-updates/providing-in-person-care>

**Q: I work in a private clinic with allied health professionals (PT, OT, RMT, etc.). Any recommendations on providing community care (in patient homes)?**

**A:** Colleges are creating their own safety protocols on this. For the most recent guidance on please refer to BCCDC COVID-19 IPC Guidance for Community-Based Allied Health Care Providers in Clinic Settings:  
[http://www.bccdc.ca/Health-Professionals-Site/Documents/COVID19\\_IPCGuidelinesCommunityBasedAlliedHCPsClinicSettings.pdf](http://www.bccdc.ca/Health-Professionals-Site/Documents/COVID19_IPCGuidelinesCommunityBasedAlliedHCPsClinicSettings.pdf)

**Q: If hairstylists are resuming clients one on one, then what is different about healthcare for patients that are not ill?**

**A:** These employers are also required to develop safety plans.

**Q: Island Health states that for primary care of patients at low risk of having COVID 19 only a surgical mask and hand hygiene are necessary. Is this true?**

**A:** Where there is low incidence and prevalence of COVID-19, additional PPE over and above that required for normal precautions is not required. For more information refer to BCCDC IPC Guidance for Community-Based Physicians, Nursing Professionals and Midwives in Clinic Settings:  
[http://www.bccdc.ca/Health-Professionals-Site/Documents/COVID19\\_IPCGuidanceCommunityBasedHCPsClinicSettings.pdf](http://www.bccdc.ca/Health-Professionals-Site/Documents/COVID19_IPCGuidanceCommunityBasedHCPsClinicSettings.pdf) and new guidance documents that will update PPE during Phases 2, 3 and 4.

**Q: Outpatient clinics that do require interventional contact, injections etc - when will be able to move forward? Procedures and PPE?**

**A:** Phase 2 of the business reopening.

**Q: What is a physician's legal and ethical obligation to working in the ER, in a situation where there is a deficiency of adequate, recommended PPE?**

**A:** In the event there are violations of a public health order and guidance as per the PPE Framework, contact the Health Authority OHS Department. You may also contact the WorkSafeBC Prevention Line: 604-276-3100 or toll free 1-888-621-7233

**Q: What is the best way to disinfect examining tables and equipment between patients?**

**A:** See page 5 (Environmental Measures) in the BCCDC IPC Guidance for Community-Based Physicians, Nursing Professionals and Midwives in Clinic Settings: [http://www.bccdc.ca/Health-Professionals-Site/Documents/COVID19\\_IPCGuidanceCommunityBasedHCPsClinicSettings.pdf](http://www.bccdc.ca/Health-Professionals-Site/Documents/COVID19_IPCGuidanceCommunityBasedHCPsClinicSettings.pdf)

**Q: If our practice is in a Health Authority, changes may not be in our control. What do you suggest?**

**A:** You must follow PHO orders firstly. Each Health Authority may have its' own nuances as set out by the MHO.

**Q: Is there a recommended amount of time that the exam room needs to sit empty after an asymptomatic patient is seen?**

**A:** Follow cleaning protocols as per guidance documents:

- BCCDC IPC Guidance for Community-Based Physicians, Nursing Professionals and Midwives in Clinic Settings: [http://www.bccdc.ca/Health-Professionals-Site/Documents/COVID19\\_IPCGuidanceCommunityBasedHCPsClinicSettings.pdf](http://www.bccdc.ca/Health-Professionals-Site/Documents/COVID19_IPCGuidanceCommunityBasedHCPsClinicSettings.pdf)
- BCCDC Environmental Cleaning and Disinfectants for Clinic Settings: [http://www.bccdc.ca/Health-Professionals-Site/Documents/COVID-19\\_MOH\\_BCCDC\\_EnvironmentalCleaning.pdf](http://www.bccdc.ca/Health-Professionals-Site/Documents/COVID-19_MOH_BCCDC_EnvironmentalCleaning.pdf)

**Q: Does the second phase on May 19 “dentists, hairdressers, barbers, chiropractors and workplace sites” include physicians’ offices for non-urgent care?**

**A:** Please refer to these updates:

- CPSBC COVID-19 Updates for Physicians: [http://www.bccdc.ca/Health-Professionals-Site/Documents/COVID19\\_EyeFacialProtectionDisinfection.pdf](http://www.bccdc.ca/Health-Professionals-Site/Documents/COVID19_EyeFacialProtectionDisinfection.pdf)
- BCCDC IPC Guidance for Community-Based Physicians, Nursing Professionals and Midwives in Clinic Settings: [http://www.bccdc.ca/Health-Professionals-Site/Documents/COVID19\\_IPCGuidanceCommunityBasedHCPsClinicSettings.pdf](http://www.bccdc.ca/Health-Professionals-Site/Documents/COVID19_IPCGuidanceCommunityBasedHCPsClinicSettings.pdf)

**Q: My clinic refused to support my request that I assess all patients first virtually, to minimize direct contact (PHO order March 23). My options?**

**A:** PHO orders must be followed.

**Q: We offer cosmetic procedures through our office, when will we be able to recommence these?**

**A:** Refer to Page 14 (Phase 2 business reopening dates) in the BC's Restart Plan:

[https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/public-safety-and-emergency-services/emergency-preparedness-response-recovery/gdx/bcs\\_restart\\_plan\\_web.pdf](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/public-safety-and-emergency-services/emergency-preparedness-response-recovery/gdx/bcs_restart_plan_web.pdf)

**Q: Do we have to change gowns between patients?**

**A:** Please refer to BCCDC IPC Guidance for Community-Based Physicians, Nursing Professionals and Midwives in Clinic Settings:

[http://www.bccdc.ca/Health-Professionals-Site/Documents/COVID19\\_IPCGuidanceCommunityBasedHCPsClinicSettings.pdf](http://www.bccdc.ca/Health-Professionals-Site/Documents/COVID19_IPCGuidanceCommunityBasedHCPsClinicSettings.pdf)

**Q: Do you have a washer for the washable gowns? We have purchased some but aren't sure how to clean them...in our own personal home washers?**

**A:** Please refer to laundry guidance in BCCDC COVID-19 Informational Sheet for Environmental Service Providers in Health Care Settings:

[http://www.bccdc.ca/Health-Info-Site/Documents/Environmental\\_Service\\_Providers\\_Health\\_Care.pdf](http://www.bccdc.ca/Health-Info-Site/Documents/Environmental_Service_Providers_Health_Care.pdf)

**Q: There is lots of evidence about laughing, coughing, singing and sneezing aerosolizing. Do we need N95 for all patient encounters?**

**A:** Following contact and droplet precautions.

**Q: What are our responsibilities to provide PPE to learners (residents, medical students, PA students) vs. university/medical school responsibilities**

**A:** Further discussion would be needed with those who supervisor/oversee this staff in your office.

Please refer to CPSBC Guidance for Registrants: Providing In-Person Community Care During COVID-19:

<https://www.cpsbc.ca/news/COVID-19-updates/providing-in-person-care>

**Q: What are the safe methods or touchless methods to receive payments from patients**

**A:** From personal experience: debit and credit card tap.

**Q: What is the evidence around transmission of COVID-19 from paper--books, pamphlets, magazines? What precautions are relevant to our clinics/waiting rooms?**

**A:** There is no evidence that the COVID-19 virus is transmitted via paper or other paper-based products.

As such, there is no need to limit the distribution of paper resources, such as leaflets, to patients because of COVID-19. For more information, refer to BCCDC IPC Guidance for Community-Based Physicians, Nursing Professionals and Midwives in Clinic Settings:

[http://www.bccdc.ca/Health-Professionals-Site/Documents/COVID19\\_IPCGuidanceCommunityBasedHCPsClinicSettings.pdf](http://www.bccdc.ca/Health-Professionals-Site/Documents/COVID19_IPCGuidanceCommunityBasedHCPsClinicSettings.pdf)

**Q: When can we as physicians re-open our offices to non-urgent medical care of patients? Our own College does not know.**

**A:** There is updated information on WorkSafeBC Health Professions: Protocols for returning to operation: <https://www.worksafebc.com/en/about-us/covid-19-updates/covid-19-returning-safe-operation/health-professionals>

**Q: When examining low risk patients, non-mucosal, non-genital, dry skin contact, are gloves always necessary now?**

**A:** Please refer to BCCDC IPC Guidance for Community-Based Physicians, Nursing Professionals and Midwives in Clinic Settings: [http://www.bccdc.ca/Health-Professionals-Site/Documents/COVID19\\_IPCGuidanceCommunityBasedHCPsClinicSettings.pdf](http://www.bccdc.ca/Health-Professionals-Site/Documents/COVID19_IPCGuidanceCommunityBasedHCPsClinicSettings.pdf)

## Slido Poll Results

**What is one change in the hierarchy of controls that you have made or heard of to reduce risks in the clinical setting?**

### Procedural

- Patient waits in car until we are ready
- Space face to face appointments to 1 per hour to allow for cleaning and prep
- Staggering in-office visits to allow for infection control procedures and no more than one patient at a time in the office
- Getting all patients to call before coming in to screen for symptoms
- Stop sign and locked door to stop the walk ins
- Vaccinations through open car window in the parking lot
- Have added handouts to our website instead of distributing
- Providing baby weighing scales for patients to sign out in cases where they need frequent weight checks (preemies, slow-to-gain, etc)
- All physicians in the office work a different day per week
- We are part of a group of clinics in our community who have centralised physical exams in one clinic to see our patients
- Direct traffic flow in one direction

### Virtual

- Conducting virtual visits through while maintaining distancing - separate exam rooms have been set up for providers and patients, they connect virtually through the EMR. Provider is in one exam room and the patient is in another
- Switching to telehealth visits/online telemedicine appointments
- Only have office visits after phone/virtual assessment

## Protocols

- Plexiglass and physical barriers at reception
- Hand sanitizer in each room
- Adequate PPE and access to it; PPE in one room for don/doff
- We wipe down between each appointment all exam tables and equipment
- Our staff wipes down the whole clinic twice a day
- Bright tape on the floor
- Chairs removed
- We have separated doctors and staff into separate teams with no overlap