

## Masking and Eye Protection Guidance in Community Physician Settings during COVID-19 Pandemic

This document provides guidance for community primary and specialty physician care settings to assist in PPE decisions for patients and providers. This guidance is based on direction from the Chief Medical Officer of Health and Alberta Health Services. Providers should consider practice environment risk assessments, clinical judgement and professional association guidance in addition to this guidance.

### General Guidance

1. Provide [virtual care as per CPSA guidance](#) during the COVID-19 pandemic.
2. Patients should call ahead for assessment prior to presenting to community physician settings (including essential accompanying persons).
3. Masking guidance:
  - **PPE for provider when caring for patient with influenza like illness (ILI) symptoms or confirmed/suspect COVID-19:** [Contact and Droplet Precautions](#) - hand hygiene, procedure mask, eye protection (face shields, mask/face shield combinations, goggles or safety glasses), gown and gloves
  - **Procedure mask and eye protection for provider caring for asymptomatic patient:** [Continuous Masking](#), [Continuous Eye Protection](#) and [Point of Care Risk Assessment](#) (PCRA)
  - **Procedure mask for patients with ILI symptoms or confirmed/suspect COVID-19:** Hand hygiene and procedure mask at entrance and wears for full visit
  - **Mask (any type) for all patients and essential companions (without ILI symptoms or confirmed/suspect COVID-19):** Hand hygiene and mask at entrance and wears for full visit
  - See this [Guidance to Help Make Continuous Masking Work for You](#) for some practical suggestions and considerations for frontline staff

	Hand Hygiene	Procedure Mask	Any mask	Eye Protection	Gloves	Gown
Provider (ILI, suspect or confirmed COVID-19)	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
Provider (asymptomatic patient)	✓	✓		✓	PCRA	PCRA
Patient (ILI, suspect or confirmed COVID-19)	✓	✓				
Asymptomatic patient and essential companion	✓		✓			

## Masking Guidance in Community Physician Settings • 2

4. All patients and accompanying persons should be screened for symptoms of COVID-19 prior to entering clinic space as per [current screening criteria](#) and staff should follow [infection control and isolation protocols](#).
5. If a patient meets screening criteria:
  - Consider testing for COVID-19 if feasible, or
  - Refer to the [COVID-19 self-assessment tool](#), or
  - Refer to 811 for further follow-up, or
  - Follow established zonal processes
6. Evidence is rapidly changing, review [PPE page](#) for latest guidance.
7. Post appropriate [signage and posters](#) where visible.
8. When patients refuse to wear face coverings in clinics, refer to this document for guidance: [Patient Refusal to Wear Face Coverings during COVID-19: Guidance for Community Physicians and Teams](#).

### More Information

**Email:** [phc@ahs.ca](mailto:phc@ahs.ca)

**Information for community physicians on COVID-19:** [www.ahs.ca/covidphc](http://www.ahs.ca/covidphc)