

Important Infection Control & Workplace Health Policy updates:

There have been important recent policy changes from the Ministry of Health (MoH) that are applicable to all physicians working in PHSA sites. The official policies can be found on SHOP.

Masking policy

- **Mandatory masking within health care facilities continues.**
- The only change is that **children 5 years and older are required to wear a medical mask when entering and moving around a health care facility** (compared to 12 years previously).
- Masks are not required for admitted patients in their rooms, although providers may ask patients / families to don them while the care team is in the room.
- Exemptions include but are not limited to:
 - A physical or mental impairment precluding mask use
 - People who are unconscious or unable to don or doff a mask without assistance
 - When communicating with somebody with a hearing impairment
 - Those whom mask may cause undue distress (e.g. labour)

PPE & Eye protection

- **Eye protection is needed for anyone on droplet and contact precautions** but is no longer required for all patient encounters outside of the Emergency Department / uncontrolled settings. (All droplet transmitted infections can be transmitted via the eyes)
- **All PPE decisions should be made based on a [point of care risk assessment](#) (PCRA) and per additional precautions where indicated.**
- For patients with confirmed/suspected COVID-19, you may choose to don an N-95 respirator based on your point of care risk assessment but should do so when performing AGMPs.

Physicians can purchase prescription eye protection; while it is not officially endorsed by workplace health as best practice for eye protective equipment, due to the fact that there are multiple options available based on manufacturing and fit, many physicians requiring corrective lenses find it much easier to use prescription goggles rather than the provided eye protection.

[Prescription eye selection requirements](#) have been published by BCCDC.

Screening

- Patients and visitors will continue to be screened at the door with questions updated to latest public health guidance.
- All health care workers (HCW) are expected to self-screen for symptoms prior to coming to work and, should never come to work sick with a possible viral infection (as all viral infections can pose risks to our patients and colleagues).
- HCW can contact [Workplace Health](#) for specific questions about returning to work after an illness.

New visitor policy

- All **patients may now have two visitors**; at BCCancer sites and BCMHSUS sites those visitors must be vaccinated (with some exceptions). An update to the Visitor Policy is in progress to clarify this.
- The **entire C&W campus is exempt from the mandatory visitor vaccination policy** issued by the MoH. Parents/caregivers/siblings of pediatric and maternity patients are considered critical members of the care team rather than visitors. Ideally, there should be no more than 2 accompanying people with the patient unless felt necessary by the medical team.

Capacity restrictions and physical distancing

- The restrictions on room occupancy and requirements for 2 meters of physical distancing have been lifted. Efforts should be made to respect personal space as safely as possible when at work.
- Given that it is respiratory virus season, overcrowding should still be avoided as much as possible.

If you have questions about infection control and patient safety contact your local [Infection Prevention & Control team](#). If you have questions about your own health, contact the Workplace Health [PHSA COVID-19 resource](#) line 1-833-875-2155 (toll free).