

Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)

TO: All Staff	DATE: <i>Last Revised February 27, 2020</i>
FROM: Chingiz Amirov , Director Clinical Support Services Marie Nunziata, Executive Director Human Resources	RE: Guidelines and Information for Staff Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Background:

On December 31, 2019, a cluster of cases of pneumonia was reported in several countries, and the cause has been confirmed as a new coronavirus that had not previously been identified in humans. This virus is now known as the 2019 Novel Coronavirus or COVID-19.

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses, some that cause illness in people and others that cause illness in animals. Human coronaviruses are common and are typically associated with mild illnesses, similar to the common cold. Rarely, animal coronaviruses can infect people, and more rarely, these can then spread from person to person through close contact.

Novel (new) coronaviruses are new strains of the virus that have not been previously identified in humans. Other novel coronaviruses have included Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) and Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS-CoV).

Purpose:

The purpose of these guidelines is to provide all staff with information on how to prevent and manage infections.

Please be aware that guidelines are subject to change as this situation evolves. Updates will be provided on recommendations and protocols as new information unfolds. As of January 23, 2020, Toronto Public Health has recommended to utilize the guidelines for MERS-CoV as the approach for managing COVID-19.

Who do these guidelines apply to?

These guidelines are applicable to all staff at Baycrest, including but not limited to Baycrest employees, physicians, contract workers, students, researchers, volunteers. The term staff is used in this document to describe these individuals.

Please be advised these guidelines are not applicable to clients, residents, families or visitors of Baycrest. For clarity, private companions fall under the extension of the resident or family.

How is Baycrest keeping our staff, residents and clients safe?

Given the rapidly evolving nature of this outbreak, ongoing risk assessments are occurring.

- IPAC is working with clinical teams to implement active screening of clients at the points of intake.
- Actively monitoring the situation and any directives coming from public health agencies and the Ministry of Health.
- Confirmed sufficient supply of personal protective equipment in such as gowns, gloves, masks, and hand sanitizer.
- Daily N95 mask fit clinics to ensure all staff records are up to date.
- Initiated meetings of clinical and operational leadership to review and act as the situation evolves.

How do I protect myself?

We continue to recommend good IPAC practices including:

- Do not come to work if you are ill or experiencing influenza like symptoms.
- If you are absent from work, continue to follow usual procedures and call the Occupational Health and Safety so appropriate screening can occur.
- Work safe. Be aware of illness activity around you and know what type of mask you have been fitted for. If you have not been mask fit tested, please schedule an appointment on the intranet. Additional mask-fit testing clinic hours are available.
- **Wash your hands.** Hand hygiene is the one of the best ways to prevent transmission of infection.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands
- **Keep an alcohol-based hand sanitizer** handy at work, home and with you at all times. It needs to be at least 60% alcohol to be effective
- **Cover your mouth and nose when sneezing.** Use a tissue when you cough or sneeze and throw the tissue out. Cough into your upper sleeve if you don't have a tissue.
- **Keep common surfaces and items clean and disinfected.**
- The best way to help reduce the potential impact to you is to protect yourself, your family and friends, stay informed and provide support to others.

Screening (Passive and Active):

- Staff are encouraged to self-screen. This is considered passive screening. If you have influenza (flu) like symptoms and are not well, please stay at home.
- Employees experiencing influenza (flu) like symptoms while at work will be referred to Occupational Health and Safety for screening.
- In the event Baycrest proceeds to active screening with controlled entry into the campus, all employees will be screened at the entrance, employees with influenza (flu) like symptoms will be referred to the "fit to work" station for assessment by Occupational Health and Safety.

Mask Fit Testing:

- Baycrest conducts mask fit testing on a regular basis and employees are required to be mask-fit tested every 2 years. If an employee experiences any changes, such as weight change re-testing sooner is recommended. If you have not been mask fit tested, please make arrangements to do so as soon as possible so that you can stay safe.
- Occupational Health and Safety will be conducting additional mask fit testing on our campus. Walk-in Mask Fit testing is taking place daily **January 28-February 16** from **6:30 – 9:30 a.m.** and **2:00-5:30 p.m.** in Loftus Hall. Mask fit testing appointments can also be scheduled on the [intranet](#).
- Employees are required to know the type of mask and size they wear at all times so they are prepared for any emergency situations that may arise. If you do not know your mask type and size and do not have your mask fit card, you can go to Occupational Health and Safety to obtain a replacement card.

Mask Fit Sessions:

Monday, March 2nd	Tuesday, March 3rd	Wednesday, March 4th	Thursday, March 5th	Friday, March 6th
APOTEX 699H 9:30-5:30 Hospital 3E88 2:30-5:30	APOTEX 699H 9:30-5:30 Hospital 3E88 2:30-5:30	APOTEX 599H 9:30-5:30	APOTEX 599H 9:30-5:30 Hospital 3E88 2:30-5:30	APOTEX 599H 9:30-5:30
Monday, March 9th	Tuesday, March 10th	Wednesday, March 11th	Thursday, March 12th	Friday, March 13th
Classroom ABC 11:00-2:00	Loftus Hall 9:00-12:00 & 2:30-5:30	Classroom ABC 9:30-5:30	Loftus Hall 2:30-5:30	Classroom ABC 9:30-5:30
Monday, March 16th	Tuesday, March 17th	Wednesday, March 18th	Thursday, March 19th	Friday, March 20th
Classroom ABC 11:00-2:00	Classroom ABC 9:30-5:30	Classroom ABC 10:00-4:00	Loftus Hall 1:00-4:00	Classroom ABC 9:30-5:30

Frequently Asked Questions:

What should I know or tell students and contractors of Baycrest?

When training students or hiring contract workers, Baycrest must inform the school/contractor that they are responsible for ensuring that their students/contractors are managed in according to these guidelines.

Does Baycrest have enough supply of personal protective equipment?

Baycrest maintains ample quantities of personal protective equipment stored on site, as part of our emergency preparedness stockpile.

I have a beard. Can I be mask-fit tested?

Employees with beards are required to shave the area of the face where the mask meets the face in order to ensure that a proper seal is achieved. If employees refuse to shave the appropriate area of the face for personal reasons, they will not have a safe and proper seal and could be putting themselves at risk to exposure to infectious disease.

Please note mustaches and goatees are allowed as they leave the face free of hair where the mask meets the face.

Employees who are unable to shave due to religious reasons will be accommodated.

When would an employee require monitoring for COVID-19?

Occupational Health and Safety is conducting enhanced screening for influenza-like symptoms, and travel history is being conducted for all reported sick cases.

Staff are encouraged to self-screen. This is considered passive screening. If you have influenza (flu) like symptoms and are not well, please stay home.

What are symptoms I should be self-monitoring?

Influenza like symptoms, such as sudden on-set of respiratory illness, fever greater than 38 degrees, cough, sore throat, joint aches, muscle aches, weakness. A combination of these symptoms and travel history are considered suspicious.

I have questions about my personal health. Who can I contact?

- For questions related to your personal health, please contact Occupational Health and Safety.
- For questions related to COVID-19 precautions, please contact your infection control practitioner during working hours; for after-hours assistance call locating for the practitioner on call.
- For any other questions, please contact your manager.

What is defined as a suspected case of COVID-19?

A person with fever (over 38 degrees Celsius) AND new onset of (or exacerbation of chronic) cough or breathing difficulty AND evidence of severe illness progression *e.g.* acute respiratory distress syndrome (ARDS) or severe influenza-like illness (may include complications such as encephalitis, myocarditis or other severe and life-threatening complications).

AND any of the following:

Travel to affected countries in the 14 days before onset of illness **OR** Close contact with a confirmed or probable case of COVID-19 **OR** close contact with a person with acute respiratory illness who has been to affected countries within 14 days prior to their illness onset **AND** in whom laboratory diagnosis of COVID-19 is not available or negative (if specimen quality of timing is suspect).

What is the definition of exposure to COVID-19?

A staff member is considered exposed if he/she was within two metres or provided care to a symptomatic confirmed or suspect COVID-19 patient while not wearing the appropriate PPE.

The following employees are a high priority for follow-up:

- A worker who provided direct clinical or personal care to, or examined a symptomatic confirmed/suspect case involving direct face-to-face contact within two meters of the case, **OR** A worker in the same room at the time an aerosol-generating procedure was performed on a confirmed or probable case **AND** who was not wearing all the appropriate PPE (gown, gloves, eye protection, N95 respirator or surgical mask).
- If appropriate personal protective equipment (i.e. N95 respirator mask, eye shield, gloves and gown, (or hood where indicated) has been worn, there is no exposure.

Is there any current prophylaxis (preventative treatments)?

There is no current prophylactic treatment for COVID-19.

Is there a vaccine available for this infection, and what can we do to protect ourselves against infection?

There is no vaccine available at present time; however, research efforts are underway to develop one. It will likely be many months before an effective and safe vaccine is available to public.

I work at multiple healthcare organizations. Are there any restrictions on my work schedule?

There are no restrictions being placed at this time.

We are hearing differing opinions about whether the COVID-19 virus is transmissible before people are symptomatic. What does this mean for screening practices?

We recognize this is a frequently asked question and international health experts are still working to identify the window of incubation and determining best practices. We are following the standard of practice that has been set to date and will continue to monitor recommendations. We will share any new or changing information that is made available to us.