

# COVID-2019 - Guidance for workers who provide in-home care and Extra-mural care

March 27, 2020

The Public Health Agency of Canada is continually monitoring the situation regarding COVID-2019. There is an increased risk of more severe outcomes for Canadians who are aged 65 and over, with compromised immune systems, with underlying medical conditions. As the situation evolves it is important to be aware of the most current information at [www.gnb.ca/coronavirus](http://www.gnb.ca/coronavirus).

Workers who are required to enter client's homes to provide their services, such as home support workers, extra-mural nurses, or allied health professionals, should only do so to offer essential services. Staying safe means asking questions. Call ahead to know your client's health status and prepare accordingly.

Guidance has been published recommending action for all members of a household if one person is showing symptoms of COVID-19. In some cases, this may be relevant for in-home care. Providers and residents will need to make judgements on a case-by-case basis

## Symptoms of COVID-19

- Fever
- Cough
- Shortness of Breath

## Transmission

Person-to-person transmission is mostly via infectious respiratory droplets or by touching a surface or an object contaminated with the virus and then proceeding to touching one's eyes, nose and mouth.

## Control measures

- If **you** are experiencing symptoms, stay home and isolate yourself from others as quickly as possible. Call TELECARE-811.
- If you have traveled outside of New Brunswick follow directives from public health, information can be found at [Health and Allied Professionals](#)
- Before arriving at a client's home, call to verify if anyone in the home is experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 or has been advised to self-isolate.

- If the answer is **no** (the client or a family member is neither symptomatic nor has been asked to self-isolate). Additional precautions are not required beyond what is being recommended for all New Brunswickers at this time:
  - Offer only essential services.
  - Maintain a 2 meter (6 feet) separation distance from others while you are in the home, where possible.
  - Perform hand hygiene frequently. Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 70% alcohol, covering all surfaces of your hands and rubbing them together until they feel dry. Soap and water should be used preferentially if hands are visibly dirty.
  - Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.
  - If transporting a client in your vehicle is necessary, have them sit in the back seat.
  - No personal protective equipment is required above and beyond normal practices.
  - Clean and disinfect your tools/equipment between clients as per organization requirements.
  
- If the answer is **yes** (the client or another person in the home) has tested positive for COVID-19, has symptoms of COVID-19 or has been asked to self-isolate due to travel or contact with a traveler:
  - Re-assess if the work is essential or urgent, get guidance from your manager
  - If you must still visit the home, ask that individuals who are ill or in self-isolation to stay in their room during your visit. If this is not possible, ask that the client to wear a mask while you are in the house (if tolerated).
  - HCW should have training on how to use appropriate personal protective equipment (droplet and contact precautions- disposable gloves, long sleeved gown, and protection for eyes, nose and mouth) and wear the personal protective equipment while in the home to protect themselves and to avoid transferring the virus to other homes/clients. The personal protective equipment must be disposed of properly following the visit.
  - Encourage good respiratory hygiene (coughing into your sleeve or tissues)
  - Maintain a 2 meter (6 feet) separation distance from others, where possible
  - Perform hand hygiene frequently. Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains 60 to 95% alcohol, covering all surfaces of your hands and rubbing them together until they feel dry. Soap and water should be used preferentially if hands are visibly dirty.
  - Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.
  - If an ill client needs to be removed from the home, avoid transporting these individuals in your vehicles, call for an ambulance to transport and advise them that the client has tested positive for COVID-19 or has symptoms after having been asked to self-isolate.

## Personal protective equipment

- If you need to be within 2 metres of the ill person, wear a mask, disposable gloves, gown and eye protection.
- Do not re-use masks or gloves.
- After removing personal protective equipment, immediately clean your hands again with soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- After use, all personal protective equipment should be disposed of in a sealed bag.
- If aerosol-generating medical procedures (AGMP) that can generate aerosols because of artificial manipulation of a person's airway, (i.e. intubation and related procedures, nebulizing therapy, manual ventilation, open endotracheal suctioning) are needed, an N95 respirator and safety glasses should be used. **Any aerosol-generating medical procedures should be avoided in the home environment. If an AGMP is required, consideration should be given to transferring the case to hospital due to the need for [Additional Precautions](#).**

## Medical equipment

After use, medical equipment should be cleaned, disinfected or sterilized in accordance with organizational procedures and manufactures instructions. It is recommended to use environmental disinfecting products registered in Canada with a Drug Identification Number (DIN) and labelled as a broad-spectrum virucide, which are sufficient for COVID-19. A list of approved products can be found [here](#).

## Cleaning

Increased cleaning activity will reduce risk of retention of the virus on hard surfaces, as will keeping property properly ventilated by opening windows whenever safe and appropriate. Cleaning products registered in Canada with a Drug Identification Number (DIN) and labelled as a broad-spectrum virucide are sufficient for COVID-19. A list of approved products can be found [here](#). All surfaces, especially those that are horizontal and frequently touched, should be cleaned and disinfected.

## Laundry

Place possibly contaminated laundry into a container with a plastic liner and do not shake. This minimizes the possibility of dispersing virus through the air. Wash with regular laundry soap and hot water (60-90°C), and dry well. Clothing and linens belonging to the ill person can be washed with other laundry. Clean your hands (with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer) immediately after handling these items. Soap and water should be used if hands are visibly dirty.

### **Monitor yourself for symptoms**

Self-monitor for symptoms for 14 days following your last contact with the ill person. If you develop symptoms, isolate yourself as quickly as possible and contact telecare 811 for further instructions.

<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/health-professionals/interim-guidance-acute-healthcare-settings.htm>