

Ministry of Health

COVID-19 Guidance: Independent Health Facilities

Version 3 – March 17, 2020

This guidance provides basic information only. It is not intended to take the place of medical advice, diagnosis or treatment.

Please check the Ministry of Health (MOH) COVID-19 website regularly for updates to this document, the latest case definition, FAQs, and other pertinent information:

<http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/publichealth/coronavirus>

Active and Passive Screening

1. The latest case definition for screening is available on the MOH [COVID-19 website](#).
2. All IHFs should undertake active screening and passive screening:
 - **Active screening** over the phone before scheduling appointments, when possible and upon entry to the IHF. Staff conducting screening should ideally be behind a barrier to protect from droplet/contact spread. A plexiglass barrier can protect reception staff from sneezing/ coughing patients.
 - **Passive screening** including [signage](#) at points of entry of the facility and at reception, using the latest case definition for COVID-19. Similar messaging can be communicated on voicemails and websites.

Positive Screening: What to do

Positive screening over the phone

3. A patient who screens positive over the phone should be asked to rebook their appointment for when they are no longer symptomatic and/or outside the 14-day period, if possible.

4. A patient who screens positive over the phone should be advised to call their [local public health unit](#) and/or telehealth (1-866-797-0000). Patients should not show up to the hospital unannounced.

Positive screening at the IHF

5. A patient who screens positive at the IHF needs to be separated from other visitors and staff so that they are at least 2 metres apart (use a separate room where available) and given a surgical/procedure mask while health workers call their local public health unit and a plan for travel and further COVID-19 assessment is made.

Testing for COVID-19

6. All testing for COVID-19 will take place in hospitals or arranged in consultation with the local public health unit. IHFs must not conduct testing for COVID-19

Reporting of Positive Screening

7. COVID-19 is a designated disease of public health significance (O. Reg. 135/18) and thus reportable under the [Health Protection and Promotion Act](#).
8. Regulated health professionals should contact their local public health unit to report a person suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19.

Occupational Health & Safety

9. IHFs should have written measures and procedures for worker safety, developed in consultation with the joint health and safety committee or health and safety representative including measures and procedures for infection prevention and control. Detailed guidelines for COVID-19 are available on the Ministry of Health [COVID-19 website](#).
10. Patient-contact surfaces (i.e., areas within 2 metres of the patient who has screened positive) should be disinfected as soon as possible (refer to [PIDAC Routine Practices and Additional Precautions In All Health Care Settings](#) for more information about environmental cleaning).