

Calgary Zone

COVID-19 UPDATES



Eye protection guidance relaxed

Eye protection is now considered to be optional in more settings in primary and acute care, according to updated guidance from the PPE task force.

Continuous eye protection is required in Alberta Health Services settings where frequent or unanticipated exposure to COVID-19 may occur. That includes emergency departments and urgent care, assessment centres and COVID-19 units, EMS and as part of respiratory or contact/droplet precautions. It should also be worn when directed to do so by a point-of-care risk assessment, prior to seeing patients.

It is now optional in all other areas or situations in AHS facilities.

[Video: PPE question of the week](#)

Guidance on masking: A reminder that the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Alberta (CPSA) recently released [updated guidance](#) on masking, as well as a [poster for clinics](#) to display in their waiting rooms. The [community clinic guidance document](#) has been updated.

Testing program changes: Alberta announced earlier this week that effective Friday, April 1, its rapid testing program for employers and service providers will no longer provide tests for non-prioritized workplace settings. However, the program will continue to distribute rapid test kits to health-care settings and those that support vulnerable or otherwise unvaccinated populations. That includes primary care, long-term care, designated supportive living and hospice settings and Alberta Health Services. [More details](#).

Paxlovid update

Clinics and physicians interested in learning more about Paxlovid prescribing in primary care are asked to email info@calgaryareapcns.ca.

A phased transition of Paxlovid prescribing into community-based clinics or sites is expected to begin as early as April. Details about testing, criteria and pharmacy support are due to be finalized in the coming weeks. Calgary and area Primary Care Networks would like to hear from physicians and clinics interested in learning more about prescribing in family practice.

Outpatient treatment for COVID-19 patients at high risk of severe outcomes is currently available through Alberta Health Services. Paxlovid is taken orally in pill form. Patients who have a lab-confirmed COVID-19 infection and can receive the treatment within five days of symptom onset are eligible if they are unvaccinated or have received one dose of vaccine and are age 55 and older or are age 18 and older with a pre-existing

health condition, or pregnant. Immunocompromised Albertans, regardless of vaccination status, are also eligible.

More information about Paxlovid is available via [AHS](#) and a [patient FAQ](#). A video of a presentation from the 67th Family Medicine Summit that featured COVID-19 care in the community – as well as Paxlovid prescribing – is also available [online](#). [Download the slides](#).

Expressing interest in learning more about Paxlovid prescribing does not commit any clinic or physician to participating in any subsequent program. More information will be shared when it is available.

Email: [Expression of Interest: Paxlovid prescribing](#).

Long COVID clinic

A new referral process has been unveiled for patients with long COVID who may be eligible to receive multidisciplinary care at an Inter-Professional Outpatient Program (IPOP) clinic.

The clinics are for patients aged 18 and older who have post-COVID symptoms that have lasted for a minimum of 12 weeks and require complex medical management and/or rehabilitation.

There are two referral options in the Calgary Zone:

1. Submit a Consult Request through Alberta Netcare eReferral, entering “Long COVID-19” as the reason for referral to the “Central Triage Long COVID Interprof Outpatient Prog – South AB” facility
2. Submit a referral by fax to the Long COVID Central Access and Triage number: 403-592-3130

[Read the memo](#).

Quick links

Reminder: COVID Corner

On Wednesday, March 23, from 7-9 p.m., COVID Corner returns with *Reflections After Two Years on the COVID Rollercoaster*. [More information](#).