

# COVID-19 UPDATES

Tuesday, May 5, 2020

## Resuming services

The CPSA has [advice](#) for physicians on which health services are reasonable to resume.

What constitutes an essential health service changes throughout a crisis as delays in accessing important but non-urgent services could result in poor health outcomes.

When considering a face-to-face appointment to ensure appropriate care, ask the following:

- Is the patient visit urgent or crucial to the patient's health, such that delay would lead to an urgency?
- Can you mitigate any risk and keep yourself and your staff safe?

Virtual care should still be used when a physical examination is not needed.

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## Seniors health

AHS's Seniors Health Clinic remains open to support seniors in person, when necessary, and virtually.

Geriatricians and clinic staff can see urgent patients in person when the benefit outweighs the risk. They also offer virtual assessments (phone or video call) to patients and families.

### Urgent referral criteria

- Recent or sub-acute decline in function
- Multiple falls in a short period of time
- Rapid decline in cognition
- Advice on dementia management challenges
- Complex chronic disease management
- Decline in functional status
- Frailty
- Review of complex medication issues

The referral form is [online](#) at the Alberta Referral Directory, and the fax number is 403-955-1514.

To speak with a triage clinician, please call 403-955-1525.

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## Testing update

Effective immediately, testing eligibility has expanded to include additional symptoms.

### New symptoms

- Painful swallowing
- Nausea, vomiting, diarrhea or unexplained loss of appetite
- Loss of sense of smell or taste
- Pink eye

Testing is also available to all close contacts of confirmed cases, even if they are asymptomatic.

All new residents entering continuing care facilities will be tested, and existing residents will be tested when they are admitted to hospital and upon discharge before return to their home site.

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## Drug information

For a limited time, CMA members have free [access](#) to therapeutic content through the Compendium of Pharmaceuticals and Specialties (CPS) online and the RxTx app.

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## Temporary residents

Accessing emergency financial services, such as CERB, will **NOT** impact permanent residency applications, and the Alberta Healthcare Insurance Plan coverage for temporary residents is extended until **July 31, 2020**.

The Temporary Foreign Worker Advisory Office and the Alberta Information Services for Permanent Residency clarified that they only track a change of employment. If your patient is a temporary foreign worker who is now unemployed, the patient is responsible for reporting the change. If the patient is hesitant, they can contact

- Immigrate to Alberta Information Service toll-free at 1-877-427-6419
- Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada Client Support Centre services at 1-888-242-2100, or submit questions [online](#).

# Quick links

## PPE video

The PPE Taskforce has a new four-minute [video](#) with Dr. Mark Joffe, chair of the PPE Taskforce, discussing the difference between N95 respirators and medical masks and when they should be used.

## COVID-19 Pivot

On **Thursday, May 7 at 10 a.m.**, the CFPC hosts a live one-hour [webinar](#): the *Rapid COVID-19 Evidence Reviews with the PEER Team*.

## Symptoms in seniors

AHS created a [poster](#) on how to recognize early symptoms of COVID-19 in seniors and clients in continuing care, congregate or home living.

## Rural OBGYN webinar (recording)

The rural video conference series continues with *Rural OBGYN Management in the Time of COVID-19*, discussing PPE, safe transport of patients with COVID-19 and virtual care in a one-hour [webinar](#) recorded on May 5.

## Prenatal webinar

On **Thursday, May 7 at 7 p.m.**, the U of C hosts a two-hour [webinar](#) on *Bumps, Babies and Beyond; Prenatal and Child care during COVID-19* that covers red flags in pregnancy, breastfeeding advice and strategies for checkups.

## News summary

- [Globe & Mail](#): How Cargill became the site of Canada's largest single outbreak of COVID-19 (May 2)
- [CBC](#): COVID-19 outbreak led to 'unprecedented' health-care response in High River (April 24)