COVID-19 Occupational Health information & guidelines for healthcare workers

Guidelines for Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for Assessment Centres

What is COVID-19?
Coronaviruses are a family of viruses; some cause respiratory illness in people, ranging from mild (common cold) to severe (pneumonia). COVID-19 is a respiratory tract infection cause by a novel (new) coronavirus called SARS-CoV2 that had not been previously detected in humans and is the cause of the current respiratory outbreak. At this time, COVID-19 does not appear to be as severe as other coronaviruses, such as SARS. Most people with it have only mild symptoms. There is evidence of person-to-person spread.

How does it spread?
COVID-19 is spread via respiratory droplets (within 2 metres) or contact (e.g. if contaminated hands touch your eyes/nose/mouth).

How can I help protect myself and others from exposure?
- Wash hands thoroughly and often. Use hand sanitizer if hands are not soiled and hand washing is not practical.
- Limit touching of the mouth, eyes, and nose to prevent any virus from being transmitted.
- Use cough/sneeze etiquette – cough/sneeze into a tissue or into your elbow, not hands – discard tissue in waste basket and clean hands with sanitizer or soap and water immediately.
- Frequently clean high-touch surfaces like counter-tops, keyboards, phones, light switches and doorknobs, etc.
- Limit sharing of equipment (e.g. pens, phones).
- Avoid group contact and maintain 2 meter separation from others, as much as possible.
- Utilize appropriate PPE when required as determined by the need for care.

What is appropriate PPE for staff working in the Assessment Centres?
Healthcare staff performing preliminary screening, not involving direct contact with patient in the triage/reception area of the assessment centre, do not require PPE if they are able to maintain spatial distance of at least 2 meters or they are separated by physical barriers such as a Plexiglas window.
If unable to have the 2 meter barrier then droplet and contact precautions are required, including:

- Surgical/procedure mask
- Isolation gown
- Gloves
- Eye protection (goggles or face shield)

For those staff that provide direct care to patients with suspect or confirmed COVID-19, including nasopharyngeal swab collection should use the PPE for Droplet and Contact precautions including:

- Surgical/procedure mask
- Isolation gown
- Gloves
- Eye protection (goggles or face shield)