



PANDEMIC PRACTICE ADVICE 3: COVID-19 SCREENING

EFFECTIVE:	MAY 19, 2020
REVISED – EFFECTIVE:	MAY 26, 2020 JUNE 15, 2020

Revision: Passive screening. Restrictions for in-person non-essential services have been amended. All deferred and non-essential services can be gradually restarted.

Revision: COVID-Screening questions and more information on positive COVID-19 screening results.

Please consult the website regularly for potential revisions to these documents.

These Information sheets are intended to help audiologists and speech-language pathologists (SLPs) to provide in-person patient care during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The information sheets include three different types of information:

- 1) **Requirements** – Legislation, regulations and College standards
- 2) **Principles** – Information from various agencies
- 3) **Suggestions** – Ideas on how to proceed

REQUIREMENTS:

Screen all patients and essential visitors for COVID-19, [Directive 2 For Health Care Providers](#).

PRINCIPLES:

- Audiologists and speech-language pathologists providing in-person services to patients should screen themselves for COVID-19 on a daily basis.
- All patients and accompanying family members or essential visitors must be screened before their appointment (Public Health Ontario). This is regardless of where the appointment takes place, in the clinic or in the community.
- The screening checklist provides basic information but is not designed to provide a diagnosis of COVID-19.

Active COVID-19 Screening

- Screening should take place over the telephone or through virtual care before the in-person appointment. Screening should occur the day of the in-person appointment or as close to the appointment as possible.

- If you have to screen a patient or visitor in person, stay behind a plexiglass barrier and wear a mask. If you don't have a plexiglass barrier, maintain a 6-foot distance from the patient and wear a surgical/procedural mask and eye protection (goggles or a face shield).
- The taking of patient temperatures is optional. If you choose to take this step, use a thermometer with disposable tips or a non-contact thermometer. **NEW***

[COVID-19 Patient Screening Guidance](#)

Date effective: June 10th, 2020 **NEW***

Q1: Non- applicable - Dispatch question for Long-Term Care

Q2: Did the person travel outside Canada in the past 14 days?

Q3: Has the person tested positive for COVID-19, or had close contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19 without wearing appropriate PPE?

Q4: Does the person have any of the following symptoms?

- Fever
- New onset of cough
- Worsening chronic cough
- Shortness of breath
- Difficulty breathing
- Sore throat
- Difficulty swallowing
- Decrease or loss of sense of taste or smell
- Chills
- Headaches
- Unexplained fatigue/malaise/muscle aches
- Nausea/vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal pain
- Pink eye (conjunctivitis)
- Runny nose/nasal congestion without other known cause

Q5: If the person is 70 years of age or older, are they experiencing any of the following symptoms:

delirium, unexplained or increased number of falls, acute functional decline, or worsening of chronic conditions.

If the response to all of the questions in NO, then the COVID screen is negative and you may see the patient in-person.

If the response to any of the questions is YES, then the COVID screen is positive

Positive COVID-19 Screen results **NEW***

- You should defer seeing the patient in-person unless you can follow [Droplet and Contact Precautions](#) (Public Health Ontario), possess the appropriate PPE (gloves, isolation gown, surgical/procedural mask and eye protection) and know how to don, doff and dispose the PPE safely.
- If you are screening in-person, and the screening result is positive, make sure the patient is masked, and carries out hand hygiene and isolate the patient from everyone else.
- If the patient's medical needs are urgent, send them to the nearest hospital emergency department.
- If the patient's medical needs are non-urgent, recommend that the patient get tested for COVID-19 as soon as possible. To help the patient, find out where is the nearest [Assessment Centre](#) or provide them with information about the local [Public Health Unit](#). Your patient can also contact [Telehealth Ontario at 1-866-797-0000](#) to determine next steps.

Passive COVID-19 Screening

- Signage should be posted at the entrance to the office/clinic and at reception areas or waiting rooms requesting patients to wear a mask (if tolerated), to perform hand hygiene and then to report to reception to self-identify.
- Sample signage is available on the MOH COVID-19 website [Signage](#).
- If the office/clinic is in a shared building, signage should also be posted at the entrance to the building.
- Publish on your website, if you have one, information about your screening protocol, what to expect at the appointment and the measures you are implementing to keep patients and families safe.

SUGGESTIONS:

- Patients can access a [self-assessment tool](#) from the Ministry of Health. This is a 6-question online questionnaire with recommendations for both positive and negative COVID-19 Screening results.

We cannot predict the consequences of the return to work, consequently further guidance may be added or changed. Also, as a self-regulated professional you must always use your professional judgement. The College's [Practice Advice team](#) is here to discuss issues with you.