

Special Bulletin

from the Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health



Date: May 22, 2020

To: Nova Scotia Health Care Providers (including 811/911)

Topic: 2019 Novel Coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2)

As we begin to further understand the presentation of SARS-CoV2 with the progression of the pandemic, we are taking the opportunity to expand the 811 screening criteria further beginning on May 22, 2020. This will allow for a greater number of individuals to be tested which will provide further information related to disease activity in Nova Scotia. The duration of time for this screening initiative is yet to be determined. These screening criteria will be used for enhanced disease surveillance purposes. Occupational Health in the NSHA and the IWK and the Continuing Care sector will have their own policies regarding PPE use and admissions protocols. The 811 screening criteria for testing will now include currently having any one of the following symptoms:

- Fever (i.e. chills, sweats)
- Cough or worsening of a previous cough
- Sore throat
- Headache
- Shortness of breath
- Muscle aches
- Sneezing
- Nasal congestion/runny nose
- Hoarse voice
- Diarrhea
- Unusual fatigue
- Loss of sense of smell or taste
- Red, purple or blueish lesions on the feet, toes or fingers without clear cause

Screening for the presence of any of the above symptoms should happen prior to any in-office care. If at all possible, this should be done virtually before the patient comes to the office – a suggested way to do this would be to have patients completing the 811 online assessment before they come to the office: <https://when-to-call-about-covid19.novascotia.ca/en>.

If screening is done in another manner, any patient who currently has one or more of the above symptoms should be directed to call 811 to arrange COVID 19 testing.

Office-based Infection Prevention and Control

Follow standard precautions in your office/community clinic as you would for other respiratory illnesses:

- screen patients on intake and for those with respiratory symptoms provide a surgical/procedure mask (N95 not required) and separate from other patients (a 2-meter separation is recommended).
- ask patients to practice respiratory/cough etiquette (wear a surgical/procedure mask and use tissues for coughing, sneezing, and controlling nasal secretions with immediate disposal of tissue in waste receptacle followed by hand hygiene).
- practice good hand hygiene (both patient and care provider) by using alcohol-based hand rub or water/soap if hands are visibly soiled.