

COVID-19 Clinical Assessment Tip Sheet

This tool was designed for primary care providers to guide their remote assessment of patients who present with COVID-19. It was inspired by the BMJ article "Covid-19: a remote assessment in primary care" and was further developed by experts within the COVIDCare@Home program at **Women's College Hospital**. The program supports community-based PCPs in caring for their patients with COVID-19. Please visit covidcareathome.ca for more resources.



1 Getting Started

Before the Appointment

Do they need translation?



Language

Check the patient's chart to see if translation services is needed

What mode of communication is preferred?



Phone

Accessible to most patients and easy to use



Video

Good for complex cases, high risk, anxious, or hard of hearing patients

Starting the Appointment



Check connectivity

Ask the patient - "Can you see/hear me?"



Confirm identity

Verify patient name and DOB
Identify anyone else on the call
(Is a SDM speaking for the patient?)



Request consent

Provide privacy information and obtain consent for the virtual appointment



Confirm contacts

Double check the patient's email, phone number and emergency contact

2 Patient Medical History

IF PATIENT IS UNWELL - SKIP TO 3. SIGNS & SYMPTOMS NOW

Determine COVID Status

Presumed Positive

Does the patient have symptoms consistent with COVID-19?
Does the patient have a known contact or exposure risk factors?

Swab Positive

Has the patient been swab tested?
What were the results and when did they arrive?

Post-discharge

Has the patient recently visited a hospital or been discharged from ED?
When, where, how long?

Review Medication

Ask the patient if they are currently taking any medication

- Drug
- Dose route
- Frequency

Mental Health

Ask about how they are coping with this difficult time. Are there signs of:

- Anxiety
- Depression
- Complex or deteriorating mental health

Identify Contextual Risk Factors

Ask the patient about situations that may impact risk of infection:

Travel risk

- Location
- Date returned

Occupational risk

- Occupation
- Date last worked

Known contact

- Date of contact

Ask the patient about situations that may impact outcome:

- Over 70 years old
- Living with elderly
- Retirement home
- Financial insecurity
- Underhoused
- Living alone
- Living with young children
- Mental health history
- Lack of access to food
- Lack of support/carer

Identify Medical Risk Factors

Ask the patient about relevant risk factors such as:

- Pregnancy
- COPD
- CKD
- CVD
- Diabetes
- Liver disease
- Asthma
- Smoking
- Malignancy
- Autoimmune
- Immunosuppressed
- Substance use
- Hypertension

3 Signs & Symptoms



Onset

Ask when the patient began to feel ill

Breathlessness

Ask if the patient is feeling short of breath (SOB) and how this has changed over time:

Severity

- SOB with exertion
- SOB at rest
- Significant SOB

Stability

- Improving
- Stable
- Worsening
- Rapid worsening

RED FLAGS

- Hemoptysis
- Confusion
- Decreased urine output
- Cold clammy skin
- Non-blanching rash

Other Symptoms

- Cough
- Sputum
- Chest Tightness
- Myalgias
- Fever
- Diarrhea
- Light headed
- Fatigue
- Loss of appetite
- Decreased fluid intake
- Anosmia

4 Exam

Vitals

Record the patient's vitals if available

- Respiration rate
- Temperature
- O2 saturation
- Heart rate
- Blood pressure

Objective Signs

Observe the patient visually or using sound over the phone



Shortness of breath



Difficulty speaking



Cyanosis



Accessory muscle use

5 Assessment & Care Plan

COVID diagnosis

Presumed Positive

Patient history and presentation gives reasonable suspicion for COVID-19?

Known Positive

Patient has a positive swab for COVID-19?

Other Diagnosis

Consider other diagnosis and comorbid conditions that can contribute to symptoms

Risk Assessment

Low Risk

- Asymptomatic,
- Few risk factors

Medium Risk

- No red-flags
- Mild symptoms
- Limited comorbidities

High Risk

- Any red-flags
- Multiple symptoms
- Abnormal vitals
- Medical complexity

Specialist Consults

You can reach out to the C@H hub for support. Visit [covidcareathome.ca](https://www.covidcareathome.ca) for more information:

- | | | |
|----------------|---------------|--------------|
| • GIM | • Social Work | • Pharmacist |
| • Respiriology | • Psychiatry | • Other |

Treatment Plan

Goals-of-care

If appropriate, discuss goals of care with the patient

- | | | |
|-----------------------------|-----------|---------------------------|
| • Supportive care in the ED | OR | • Palliative care in home |
|-----------------------------|-----------|---------------------------|

Investigation

- Send patient to assessment centre for swab test
- Request community-based investigations

Prescriptions & Conservative Management

- Prescribe medication (eg. acetaminophen)
- Safety netting (if living alone identify someone to check-in regularly, high fluid intake, seek medical help if deteriorating)
- Provide education and self management resources (i.e. [covidcareathome.ca](https://www.covidcareathome.ca))

Follow-up Plan



Self monitoring, on-call number



1 x Daily phone or video call



2 x Daily phone or video call



Send symptom relief kit

If patient doesn't want ED transfer



Transfer to ED

Low Risk

High Risk

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