

# 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](http://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
- Respirology
- 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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