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

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 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

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

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

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

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

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
- Asymptomatic, few risk factors
- No red-flags
- Mild symptoms
- Limited comorbidities
- Any red-flags
- Multiple symptoms
- Abnormal vitals
- Medical complexity

High Risk

Specialist Consults
You can reach out to the C@H hub for support. Visit covidcareathome.ca for more information:
- GIM
- Respirology
- Social Work
- Psychiatry
- Pharmacist
- Other

Treatment Plan
Goals-of-care
If appropriate, discuss goals of care with the patient
- Supportive care in the ED
- Palliative care in home

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

Prescriptions & Conservative Management
- Prescribe mediation (e.g. 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)

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
Transfer to ED