

# COVID-19 Update

## Employee and Physician Information



## All Staff Memo from the Incident Commander

December 31, 2021

**Re: COVID-19 Update**

**Staff booster clinics, PPE, masking and physical distancing, onsite food and other information**

### Staff COVID-19 booster clinics

Eastern Health recognizes the critical role of its employees during this latest outbreak and is working hard to quickly organize booster clinics for staff working at all facilities. Clinics are taking place at some key sites including at Carbonear General Hospital, the Health Sciences Centre, St. Clare's Mercy Hospital and sites in the Burin and Bonavista Peninsulas.

We are continuing to work out schedules for these and other sites throughout the region. Dates and locations will be communicated by site leads via your manager when clinics have been scheduled in your area. In addition, we are looking at ways to distribute boosters on units to both staff and in-patients. We will communicate more information once details are available.

Employees aged 30 years and over will receive the Moderna vaccine. For those employees who are aged 29 and under, it is recommended you receive the Pfizer vaccine. This vaccine will be available at Eastern Health public clinics throughout the region and must be booked directly through the Provincial Government booking site at [www.gov.nl.ca/covid-19/vaccine/gettheshot/](http://www.gov.nl.ca/covid-19/vaccine/gettheshot/). Staff can also obtain vaccines through their pharmacy/physician or one of the Eastern Health public clinics.

### Calls to Public Health Lab

We kindly ask staff to not call the Public Health Lab to try and obtain their COVID-19 swabbing results as this can potentially interrupt work the lab is doing including analyzing COVID-19 swabs. Instead, staff should check the Provincial Government's online [Patient Results Portal](#) to obtain their swabbing results.

### COVID-19 results portal

Positive test results are now accessible through the Provincial Government's online Patient Results Portal. Patients testing positive will still be contacted by a representative from Public Health, but it may take up to 72 hours due to the high volume of testing currently underway in all regions. If you see a positive test result, guidance can be found [here](#).

### **Calls to Occupational Health**

Due to the very high call volume that Occupational Health is currently experiencing, we ask staff who may have either been directly exposed to a positive case, or exposed to a contact of a positive case, to discuss with their manager while they await the call from Occupational Health.

### **Supply of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)**

The Provincial Supply Chain Department actively oversees PPE supply to ensure adequate quantities for Eastern Health staff and physicians during the COVID-19 pandemic. Through regular communication with the Provincial Supply Chain Department, Eastern Health can confirm that there are currently adequate supply levels of essential PPE. As such, it is important that users of PPE order supplies through Stores efficiently to effectively avoid unit overstock of specific items. It is important to also remember that some PPE items have expiration dates.

To ensure appropriate levels of PPE, the Provincial Supply Chain Department actively:

- Monitors and analyzes PPE burn rates (i.e. the daily rate at which Eastern Health uses PPE);
- Manages PPE inventory via procurement, distribution and replenishment strategies; and
- Maintains intimate knowledge and relationships with PPE vendor networks.

PPE items include: gloves, gowns, surgical masks, surgical masks with visor attachment, respirators, face shields, eye protection, wipes, hand sanitizers, etc.

### **Masking Requirements and Physical Distancing**

Mask compliance continues to be mandatory for all Eastern Health employees, students, physicians and volunteers while in an Eastern Health facility, or while working for the organization outside of an Eastern Health site/facility, such as during home visits by staff in the community, at community-leased sites and at vaccination clinics.

Staff are also asked to encourage all clients, visitors and residents to wear masks (if their health permits) when these individuals are less than six feet apart from others.

In addition, there is no such thing as a **“work bubble.”** Staff are reminded about the following guidelines when with co-workers in break rooms, cafeterias, workspaces, elevators, etc.:

- Keep a distance of six feet between others when unmasked while eating and drinking;
- Masks can only be removed in designated eating areas or when alone in an office space;
- Masks are required in shared spaces and common areas;
- Masks are also required when working behind plexiglass with openings and interacting/working with the public; and
- Staff are also reminded to please maintain social distancing while using elevators.

## **Onsite-Food**

As a measure to prevent and minimize the spread of infection in the workplace, staff, physicians and visitors are permitted to bring food, which may include take-out food, for **personal consumption** only. As such, an employee is not able to bring in take-out food for others.

Please be advised that take-out food for **group consumption** is not allowed on Eastern Health facilities. This includes take-out food from grocery stores or other food vendors. At no time are staff permitted to share food, nor is food permitted to be dropped off for personal consumption or group consumption. For the safety of staff and physicians, please respect infection control and prevention guidelines.

## **Additional Guidance**

All personal items, including food items, should be stored in designated areas and not in common spaces (example: nursing desks).

Information and guidelines around this outbreak are constantly changing. Please keep up-to-date by speaking with your manager, read employee memos such as this one and visit the Eastern Health website [News & Advisories](#) and [COVID-19](#) sections.

On behalf of the executive team, I'd like to extend a sincere thank you for your hard work in keeping yourselves and others safe and wish you all the best as we step into a new year together.

**Judy O'Keefe**

Incident Commander

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Report all potential communicable diseases to Occupational Health: 709-777-7777, line 3, line 2, or email [occhealth@easternhealth.ca](mailto:occhealth@easternhealth.ca).

Navigator Line: 709-752-3663 | [www.easternhealth.ca/covid19](http://www.easternhealth.ca/covid19) | [COVID-19 Intranet page](#) | [Facebook](#) | [Twitter](#)