

# INFECTION PREVENTION AND CONTROL GUIDANCE

## For Community Immunization Clinics

November 22, 2024

This guidance outlines infection prevention and control (IPC) measures required for the set-up and safe operation of immunization clinics in community settings (e.g., community pharmacies, public health units, schools, community centres, and arenas).

### Screening for Viral Respiratory Illness Symptoms

- All clinical and non-clinical [health care workers](#) (HCWs) and [clients](#) must screen themselves for signs and symptoms of viral respiratory illness (VRI), such as influenza and COVID-19.
  - These signs and symptoms include but are not limited to fever/chills, new/worsening cough, sore throat, shortness of breath, vomiting\*, or diarrhea\*.  
*\*May be present in some patients with VRI, especially children.*
- Clients who have VRI symptoms should stay home until their fever (if present) has resolved and they feel well enough to participate in daily activities.
- For health authority-operated immunization clinics, all HCWs and patients/residents/clients must follow applicable [provincial IPC policies and directives](#) (e.g., IPC measures put in place during VRI season). In other settings, such as schools and community centers, clients are encouraged to wear a mask at their own discretion based on personal choice.

### Clinic Layout and Supplies

#### Set up the immunization clinic as follows:

- Provide hand hygiene stations at entrance and exit points, registration desks, immunization stations, after care areas, and for general use.
- Set up signage to self-screen for VRI symptoms for all individuals entering the clinic at each designated entry point.
- Have a separate area for processing people who require extra support (e.g., a person who is unable to wear a mask because of a physical, behavioural, or cognitive impairment or health condition).
- Use [signs and posters](#) to promote IPC practices such as respiratory and hand hygiene.
- Respect personal space and avoid overcrowding.

#### Ensure equipment and supplies are available:

- Alcohol-based hand rub (ABHR) with 70% alcohol content and/or hand hygiene sink(s) with soap and water.
- Cleaning and disinfection wipes that have a drug identification number from [Health Canada's approved list of hard-surface disinfectants](#).
- Sharps containers at all immunization stations.
- Personal protective equipment (PPE) as required (e.g., medical mask, gloves, and eye protection). Provide a medical mask to clients who ask for one.
- Tables and chairs with cleanable surfaces (e.g., non-porous and smooth, free of cracks and crevices, can withstand frequent cleaning and disinfection).

## Health Care Worker Safety

### Self-screen for VRI symptoms before each shift

- Clinical and non-clinical HCWs, volunteers, and others must self-screen for VRI symptoms prior to each shift, in accordance with employer communicable disease plans.
- Stay home if you are feeling sick or experiencing signs and symptoms of VRI.
- Follow measures outlined in the [VRI health care worker self-check and safety checklist](#).

### Hand hygiene

- Perform frequent hand hygiene using ABHR or soap and water.
- Perform hand hygiene between every client interaction, between breaks, before wearing PPE, after removing each piece of PPE, after using the washroom, and any other time hands are potentially contaminated.

### PPE for staff

- Clinical and non-clinical HCWs, volunteers, and others must follow applicable [provincial IPC policies and directives](#) (e.g., IPC measures put in place during VRI season), including medical mask requirements when providing care for a client in health authority-operated immunization clinics.
- Community pharmacists providing immunizations should follow mask guidance from their regulatory college.
- Immunizers should wear gloves when administering intranasal influenza vaccine.
  - Conduct a [point-of-care risk assessment](#) to determine if any additional PPE is needed.
- If gloves are worn, they must be changed in between each client. Perform hand hygiene after removing gloves.
- Non-client-facing personnel (e.g., custodial or administrative) in community settings should follow their organizational communicable disease prevention plan on the use of medical masks and other PPE.
- Health care workers should review and follow guidance on appropriate use of [PPE](#), including how to wear a medical mask and proper donning and doffing of PPE.

## Cleaning and Disinfection

### Ensure proper cleaning and disinfection of surfaces

- Clean and disinfect the immediate work and client area after each client leaves the immunization station.
- Use friction action and move from clean to dirty areas when cleaning.
- Clean and disinfect commonly touched surfaces twice a day and as needed.
- Clean and disinfect public washrooms twice a day and as needed.
- At the end of the day, clean and disinfect:
  - Tables and chairs.
  - All other horizontal surfaces or commonly touched surfaces.
  - Physical barriers (e.g., dividers or screens, if used).
  - Transport coolers and equipment.
- Ensure biomedical waste is properly collected and disposed at the end of the day.
- See the [British Columbia Best Practices for Environmental Cleaning for Prevention and Control of Infections in all Healthcare Settings and Programs](#) for more information.