INFO SHEET

COVID-19 FAQ

The legislative mandate of the College of Licensed Practical Nurses of Alberta (CLPNA) is to serve and protect the public by ensuring its members deliver safe, competent, and ethical nursing care. An Info Sheet informs membership on relevant nursing topics or the CLPNA's processes.

INTRODUCTION The College of Licensed Practical Nurses of Alberta (CLPNA) understands that licensed practical nurses (LPNs) must be informed about COVID-19, and the related risks. This FAQ document provides up-to-date information and will be updated weekly and as appropriate with the most accurate information.

For COVID-19 information related to LPN practice, please refer to the CLPNA document on Common Questions: LPN Practice during COVID-19 at https://www.clpna.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/doc_Info_Sheet_LPN_Practice_COVID-19.pdf.

The CLPNA recommends that LPNs remain alert and informed about COVID-19 but not be alarmed. It is important that LPNs continue to follow infection prevention and control best practices and adhere to employer requirements to aid public health.

The following CLPNA documents are important to consider during this time:

The Standards of Practice for Licensed Practical Nurses in Canada:

https://www.clpna.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/doc_CCPNR_CLPNA_Standards_of_Practice.pdf

The CCPNR Code of Ethics:

https://www.clpna.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/doc_CCPNR_CLPNA_Code_of_Ethics.pdf

The Policy on Professional Responsibility and Accountability:

https://www.clpna.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/doc_Policy_Professional_Responsibility_Accountability.pdf

The Policy on Expectations and Obligations for LPNs during Emergencies:

https://www.clpna.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/doc_Policy_Expectations_Obligations_During_Emergencies.pdf

The Info Sheet on Pandemic Characteristics and Response Measures:

https://www.clpna.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/doc_info_Sheet_Pandemic_Characteristics_and_Response_Measures.pdf

What is COVID-19?

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses. Some cause respiratory illness in people, ranging from mild common colds to severe illnesses.

Novel coronaviruses, like COVID-19, are new strains of the virus that have not been previously identified in humans. This means people have no immunity against it, and it has no specific vaccine or treatment. [1]

Because COVID-19 can cause serious illness, it is critical to keep it from spreading by having people with symptoms follow mandatory self-isolation requirements. [2]

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Further academic and clinical information about COVID-19 can be found at:

https://www.dynamed.com/condition/covid-19-novel-coronavirus[3]

How is COVID-19 transmitted?

The Government of Alberta provides information at https://www.alberta.ca/coronavirus-info-for-albertans.aspx.[4]

COVID-19 is transmitted though tiny droplets of liquid produced by people who have the virus.

These droplets spread by:

- coughing, sneezing, talking, laughing, and singing
- touching objects or surfaces the virus has landed on and then touching your eyes, nose or mouth (bath towels, kitchen utensils, doorknobs, etc.)

People who have COVID-19 can spread it to others before they start to feel sick.

COVID-19 is not airborne, which means it doesn't stay in the air long and won't go very far. But if you are too close to someone with COVID-19 you can get sick by breathing in air that contains droplets with the virus.

The Government of Alberta states they think the virus generally only survives for a few hours on a surface or object, but it may be possible for it to survive several days under some conditions.

What is my level of risk?

The Government of Alberta provides the following personal risk assessment tool: https://www.alberta.ca/lookup/COVID-19-personal-risk-severity-assessment.aspx

What about infection prevention and control as an LPN?

Infection and Prevention Control Canada provides information about COVID-19 as well as many strategies for interacting with patients with suspected/confirmed COVID-19 at https://ipac-canada.org/coronavirus-resources.php.[5]

The World Health Organization provides additional infection prevention and control information for health workers at https://www.epi-win.com/covid-19-faqs.[6]

How can I protect myself and others?

Alberta Health Services provides education for LPNs and other healthcare professionals at https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/assets/healthinfo/ipc/hi-ipc-emerging-issues-ncov.pdf. This document details infection prevention and control protocols.[7]

All Albertans have a responsibility to help prevent the spread. Take steps to protect yourself and others:

- practice physical distancing
- practice good hygiene: wash hands often for at least 20 seconds, cover coughs and sneezes, and avoid touching face
- monitor for symptoms: cough, fever, shortness of breath, runny nose or sore throat
- self-isolate for the legally-required 10 days if you have any symptoms that are not related to a pre-existing illness or medical condition
- take the COVID-19 self-assessment if you're concerned about your health
- health care workers should follow guidelines for personal protective equipment (PPE) when caring for individuals who may have COVID-19. These PPE guidelines can be found at https://www.alberta.ca/assets/documents/covid-19-healthcare-ppc-guidance.pdf [8]

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Alberta Health outlines the following tips about physical distancing:

https://www.alberta.ca/assets/documents/covid-19-social-distancing-fact-sheet.pdf[9]

Alberta Health Services provides the following documents to help guide you in proper alcohol-based hand rub and hand washing techniques:

https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/assets/healthinfo/ipc/if-hp-flu-hand-rub-how-to.pdf.[10]

https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/assets/healthinfo/ipc/if-hp-ipc-flu-handwash-how-to.pdf.[11]

The Pan-Canadian Public Health Network released information about the use of non-medical cloth masks or face coverings in community settings. You can find this information at:

http://www.phn-rsp.ca/sac-covid-ccs/wearing-masks-community-eng.php

The World Health Organization releases situation reports about COVID-19 daily. These reports indicate any new confirmed cases of COVID-19 and their locations.[12] You can find reports at https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/situation-reports. Please take note of the Recommendations and Advice for the Public section of these documents which provides guidance for responding to COVID-19 in your localized setting.

The World Health Organization provides free online modules about many aspects regarding COVID-19 at https://openwho.org/courses.[13] The *ePROTECT Respiratory Infections* course explains acute respiratory infections and basic hygiene measures to protect against infection.

Where can I find additional up-to-date information about screening or information about COVID-19?

For all public health orders regarding COVID-19 from the Chief Medical Officer of Health, Dr. Deena Hinshaw please visit:

https://www.alberta.ca/covid-19-orders-and-legislation.aspx

The Government of Canada includes the followings webpages for information on COVID-19 generally and specifically for health professionals:

https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/coronavirus-disease-covid-19.html

Health Canada in partnership with Thrive Health has created the Canada COVID-19 app. You can find this app for iPhone, Android, or Web platforms at: https://www.thrive.health/canada-covid19-app

This app is a central resource for accessing personalized, trusted, evidence-informed information about the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Government of Alberta has created the ABTraceTogether app to help with contact tracing. Information about this app can be found at https://www.alberta.ca/ab-trace-together.aspx

Please use this Government of Alberta Self-Assessment tool to help determine whether healthcare workers should be tested for COVID-19:

https://www.alberta.ca/assets/documents/COVID-19-assessment-tool-for-health-care-workers-and-public-health-enforcement.pdf

For members of the public Alberta Health Services provides a separate self-assessment tool:

https://myhealth.alberta.ca/Journey/COVID-19/Pages/COVID-Self-Assessment.aspx

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Please also see Alberta Health Services FAQ for information relevant to nursing practice at

https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/assets/info/ppih/if-ppih-ncov-2019-staff-faq.pdf. [14]

Where should I go for information about international travel?

Please visit https://travel.gc.ca/travelling/health-safety/travel-health-notices for information about the levels of risk of travelling to specific countries. The Government of Canada has recommended that people avoid all non-essential travel to international destinations.[15]

What do I need to know about Alberta's relaunch strategy?

On April 30, 2020 the Government of Alberta announced a three-phase relaunch strategy for loosening restrictions put in place during the COVID-19 pandemic. This strategy allows for a phased re-opening of many areas of the economy and includes medical and healthcare procedures.

For information about the relaunch please see:

https://www.alberta.ca/alberta-relaunch-strategy.aspx

The CLPNA developed guidelines with the College and Association of Registered Nurses of Alberta (CARNA) and the College of Registered Psychiatric Nurses of Alberta (CRPNA) for self-employed nurses to use during Alberta's Relaunch Strategy. Self-employed nurses can use these guidelines starting May 14, 2020 which aligns with stage one of Alberta's Relaunch Strategy.

These guidelines can be found here:

https://www.clpna.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/doc_Guidelines_Self-Employed_Nurses_AB_Relaunch_Strategy.pdf

CONCLUSION Information about COVID-19 is evolving rapidly. The CLPNA will work with Alberta Health and other external stakeholders to communicate up-to-date information relevant for LPN practice. Your employer will provide additional information specific to your practice setting or facility. The CLPNA will update this document weekly and as appropriate.

Be alert not alarmed!

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1 Government of Alberta (GoA), "COVID-19 coronavirus info for Alberta," 2020, https://www.alberta.ca/coronavirus-info-for-albertans.aspx.

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13 WHO, "Open Courses," 2020, https://openwho.org/courses.

14 AHS, *novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) FAQs for Staff* (2020), https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/assets/info/ppih/if-ppih-ncov-2019-staff-faq.pdf.

15 Government of Canada, "Travel health notices," 2019 https://travel.gc.ca/travelling/health-safety/travel-health-notices.