

Inpatient Staff Support – FAQ (Updated May 13, 2020)

We have developed the below FAQ, which staff can reference as a script, to help navigate conversations with inpatient clients and families.

While there may not always be an immediate answer available, please be solutions-focused in your approach. Acknowledge the question, concern, feedback and let the family know that Holland Bloorview will endeavour to address them as best and as soon as they can in light of changing protocols/practices/guidelines around COVID-19.

Please feel free to also reference our [All Staff FAQ](#).

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Inpatient rooms – sanitation practices and room upgrades

Are family caregivers required to stay in the room with their child or loved one or can they walk around the unit or hospital with their child or loved one? What are the restrictions?

Family caregivers have access to the inpatient family lounge and laundry area, therapy areas, cafeteria, Spiral Garden outdoors, and other common areas within the hospital, such as the Atrium. In line with the new mask policy announced on March 27, family caregivers must wear a mask when leaving their child or loved one's room. Family caregivers must continue to practice proper hand washing and physical distancing.

When required, a family caregiver designate can book transportation at the main reception desk near the hospital's entrance, for grocery and pharmacy runs. Please inquire with main reception to book one of our pre-selected dates and times for pick-up/drop-off.

If my child or loved one is in a 4-person or semi-private room, what precautions are being taken to ensure the other client caregivers do not contaminate my child's area?

Inpatient rooms are cleaned daily and garbage is removed twice daily.

Every child receiving our care is assessed daily and if any are showing symptoms, their care team will share details on proper precautions to take, or if possible, will move the child into isolation until further notice. Client caregivers are assessed via our request that they visit the screening desks daily on the main floor.

When children share rooms, we will do our very best to prevent spread to a roommate by using our protective equipment, washing our hands often, and cleaning shared equipment between use. Families can also help prevent the spread by not visiting when sick, wearing a mask, and washing their hands often.

Can my child or loved one be moved to a private room at this time?

During a pandemic, we often use private rooms for isolation to prevent the spread of viruses to a roommate if they are showing symptoms of fever, cough, runny/stuffy nose, sore throat, muscle aches/pains, vomiting or diarrhea. Single rooms are also offered to those who have an antibiotic resistance to bacteria that can be spread from person to person. When in these rooms, staff will wear protective equipment when caring for these children.

When single rooms are not available, we will do our very best to prevent spread of viruses to a roommate by using protective equipment, washing our hands, and cleaning shared equipment between use. Families can also help prevent the spread of viruses by not visiting when sick, wearing a mask, and frequently washing their hands.

Preventing the spread of COVID-19 - isolation protocols, staff testing

Are new hospital admissions being accepted? If so, are they subject to a 14-day isolation to prevent potential spread of COVID-19?

Children coming to us are being screened as part of admission and monitored regularly. Client admissions from home will be placed in isolation and both the child and their family caregiver(s) will be tested for COVID-19. In the interim, they will remain in isolation for approximately 48 hours or until their test results come back negative.

Are members of my child's care team being tested for COVID-19?

At this time, front-line staff are not being proactively tested for COVID-19. Due to the limited number of test kits available, the Government of Ontario has an online assessment tool that will help people determine if they need to visit an assessment centre.

Rest assured that any staff who meet the criteria to be assessed will not be permitted to work until they can confirm that they have been tested negative and do not have the virus.

We are also screening all staff upon entry into the hospital for any signs of respiratory illness. A reminder that, in these winter months, other viruses like the common cold are circulating in the environment. Some staff members may present with minor symptoms, like a runny nose, and will be asked to wear a mask, which is consistent with our regular hospital policies that are enforced during this time of year. Staff with multiple symptoms will be sent home.

What happens if my child or loved one begins to experience symptoms related to COVID-19?

Any child on the inpatient floor showing symptoms of COVID-19 will immediately be placed in a private room and will be tested. Based on guidance from Toronto Public Health, if the test is positive, the child's family caregiver and the roommate (if there was one), along with their family caregiver, may also be tested and isolated for 14 days.

All staff entering the room are required to wear proper PPE.

What if I begin to experience symptoms and I am my child or loved one's only caregiver?

If you are at the hospital or at home and begin to experience symptoms, please notify your child or loved one's care team **immediately**. We ask that you please go or stay home and wait for further instructions from your child's care team. We understand that potentially being away from your child or loved one may be a very scary thought, but it is important that parents or family caregivers take care of themselves too. While we won't be able to replicate the role you play at bedside, your child or loved one's care team is here to offer support should you need to self-isolate.

What types of warnings will the hospital share with caregivers who do not follow masking, physical distancing, or daily screening expectations?

We want to encourage and coach families to participate in the masking, daily screening and physical distancing (6 feet). We understand this can be challenging to do day after day and appreciate your patience and diligence in following the guidance we provide. Beyond the conversations we have, we can only ask for your support in being consistent with the policies we have.

In doing so, you help us keep our entire community of inpatient families and Holland Bloorview staff safe. If for some reason, this is challenging, please bring it to your care team's attention so we can proactively problem solve. We do permit parents to get a break and go mask free so they can be close to their loved one. Many stay overnight, so it also makes it easier to sleep.

In addition to masking, we have a number of measures to protect our clients, their families and staff:

- Some designated parents/caregivers are being swabbed to ensure they are COVID- free
- Anyone coming into the building is screened for symptoms and other factors that might promote virus spread
- Caregivers staying overnight and not leaving the hospital are also screened daily
- We have cloth masks available at reception to be worn outside of the hospital to protect you when you go grocery shopping.

Please let your care team know if you notice someone not wearing a mask. We are happy to work with families to understand their perspective and help them adhere to the policy.

To help protect my child and reduce the number of people they interact with, can my family be assigned a team of dedicated therapists?

Since we no longer have the opportunity to issue weekend passes, we have redeployed skilled ambulatory staff to support the inpatient team with a 7 day model for therapy. Initially as we were orienting the redeployed staff to inpatient teams, it would have felt that there were many therapists working with you. This training is for the most part complete. It is important to note that there are many mechanisms that ensure a meaningful handover between team members

Do any members of my care team work at multiple sites? Should I be concerned?

If a member of your care team worked at a hospital that had an outbreak, but they did not work on the affected unit, they can continue to work at Holland Bloorview. The only exception is for respiratory therapists (RTs). RTs always wear high levels of personal protective equipment (PPE) and they can report to work at Holland Bloorview as long as they have no symptoms of COVID-19. Since RTs are in high demand at this time, this policy allows us to continue to meet the needs of our clients and ensures we have proper staffing during all shifts.

A SickKids inpatient tests positive for COVID-19

What additional safety measures are we taking?

Announced on April 28, a SickKids inpatient tests positive for COVID-19. For additional details and updates on the changing situation, please visit the SickKids website at:

www.sickkids.ca/AboutSickKids/Newsroom/.

As mentioned in our inpatient letter on April 29, we will:

- Investigate what options exist for virtual care should your loved one have a scheduled appointment at SickKids
- Stay close in touch with SickKids to monitor the situation for possible impact to Holland Bloorview

We understand that this may cause fear and anxiety for you and that you will have questions. We want to reassure you that your care team is here to answer your questions and provide support. It goes without saying that we will inform you if there is ever a positive case at Holland Bloorview.

What will we continue to do to keep our community safe?

- Screen our clients and their caregivers for COVID-19 before admission;
- carefully monitor each of our clients and have measures in place, including testing and isolation processes, should there be a client with respiratory symptoms;
- do our very best to prevent the spread of viruses, regardless of whether you are in a single or shared room, by using our protective equipment, washing our hands often and cleaning shared equipment between use;
- have more than enough personal protective equipment (PPE) available for the staff caring for your loved one, as well as for family caregivers; and
- ask you to continue following our masking, physical distancing and family caregiver visitation guidelines.

Holland Bloorview remains a safe place for our clients, families and staff thanks to the daily screening, masking and physical distancing measures in place. We continue to review and revise our infection prevention and control (IPAC) measures including screening based on new provincial direction, advice from public health and any new evidence.

Will families be notified if a client, caregiver or staff member tests positive for COVID-19? If so, how will this be communicated?

- A client or family member that tests positive will be informed of their test result by their physician.

- Due to client confidentiality we will not be releasing the name of the client or family member.
- Family members who test positive will be asked to return home and identify an additional caregiver that can be onsite.
- Similarly, due to confidentiality of personal health information, if a staff person tests positive we would not release the name of that individual.
- We will communicate with families if we have a COVID-positive case via letter and in-person rounding.

I have an appointment at SickKids and I'm concerned to attend it because of their COVID-19 outbreak two weeks ago (April 28). What shall I do?

At this time (Wednesday, May 13) SickKids is not in outbreak. We encourage you to attend any scheduled appointments, however please speak with a member of your care team directly if you have any concerns or questions. Virtual appointments may be an option.

Limit to family caregivers onsite

Why did Holland Bloorview temporarily reduce the number of family caregivers allowed in the hospital?

Reducing the number of family caregivers in the hospital was a directive that we received from the Ministry of Health in Ontario. While most hospitals no longer allow any family caregivers or visitors onsite at all, we were given special consideration as a children's hospital to allow one family caregiver or visitor per child in the building at a given time because of their important role providing care, comfort and also decision making.

We know that this may be upsetting for you and your child or loved one. Our focus in this new and temporary measure, is making sure that everyone in the hospital is safe and that there is no interruption to the care and to the progress your child or loved one has made here so far. We also need to take necessary measures to prevent a COVID-19 outbreak at the hospital.

How long will these strict measures be in place at the hospital?

Given the constant, daily changes surrounding COVID-19, at the moment, we can't say for sure how long the pandemic will last. Earlier this week, the City of Toronto declared a state of emergency and we know more people are being tested and diagnosed for the virus.

Until we hear from the Ontario government, the protective measures in place, like screening, limiting people in the building, will continue.

What we *do* know is that self-isolation is the best way to prevent the spread of COVID-19. These are difficult decisions for us to make, especially considering their impact to our children and their families. Ultimately, every decision we make at the hospital is made to help keep our community safe.

I have a unique situation requiring two caregivers at the bedside. Who should I speak with?

Please feel free to speak with a member of your care team who can help ensure that you have a clear and accurate understanding of the protocols in place.

If the client family still feels that they have all the information they need and would still like to challenge this protocol, they should be directed to Client and Family Relations who will triage accordingly.

Weekend passes/LOAs

Why can't I bring my child or loved one home on the weekends anymore?

We understand that weekend passes and Leaves of Absence are an important part of rehabilitation care and something that your child or loved one looks forward to. The decision to pause this until further notice is due to a directive by the Government of Ontario to help prevent potentially bringing COVID-19 into the hospital.

We know that this is disappointing. To help make sure all of our children feel engaged and are getting what they need to maintain their growth and rehab progress, we are ramping up things like occupational therapy, physiotherapy and therapeutic recreation.

We are also going to make iPads available on the units so clients can virtually stay connected with friends and family during this time. There is currently one available in the Teen Lounge.

Can staff and families go to the parking lot or other outside areas of the hospital to get a break?

Currently, weekend passes (leave of absence) are paused until further notice in order to keep our community safe from possible spread of the virus. Please note that meeting family members/visitors with your inpatient loved one in areas outside the front entrance (examples: parking lot, grassy area, bike rack areas) of the hospital is considered a leave of absence, and such gatherings are not allowed at this time.

Clients and family caregivers can access our outside space including the Spiral Garden and third floor terraces to enjoy fresh air. It is important to note that these are the *only* outside spaces that families can access. Please remember to physically distance from others (6 feet apart).

Meal options

What food options are available to inpatient families?

To prevent families from leaving the hospital to find their own meals, especially when most dine-in places are closed, we're happy to report that Holland Bloorview has made arrangements to provide complimentary dinner for all family caregivers.

Free frozen meals

These are available to all inpatient families on-demand in the mini freezer located inside the kitchen on the Brain Injury Rehabilitation Team (BIRT) unit. Please note the limit of **one meal** per family caregiver, per day. For food safety reasons, these meals should be consumed within one hour of removing them from the mini freezer.

Family-sized pre-packaged meals

These can also be pre-ordered to take home, if/when needed. Menus will be posted in the café downstairs. Please e-mail Chef Todd McKinnon at tmckinnon@hollandbloorview.ca by 5pm daily for next-day pick-up in the café between 2-3 p.m.

You are also welcome to bring or order your own food for delivery. We ask that, like everywhere else in the hospital, that you respect physical distancing practices when dining in common areas. There should be signage in these areas to provide clear directions on what that may look like.

Grocery to Go Program

We are bringing the grocery essentials to you via our new Pop-Up Grocery store! Located in the salad bar area of The Garden Grill, you'll find fresh produce, dairy products, along with everyday pantry items – all pre-packaged and marked at grocery store prices. Hours of operation are: Monday-Friday between 7:30 a.m. and 4 p.m.

Masking policy

What is the new family caregiver mask policy (implemented on May 8)?

All family caregivers are expected to wear a mask at all times where physical distancing of at least 2 meters (6 feet is not possible). The change to our mask policy was made in response to:

- the evidence of virus transmission by individuals not showing any symptoms (asymptomatic);
- the increase of COVID-19 outbreaks at many hospitals across Ontario; and
- the evidence that children may experience different symptoms than adults.

You will need to wear the mask:

- in common spaces like the elevators, stairs, and hallways
- in your loved one's room, especially if in a shared room when physical distancing cannot be maintained with other clients or family caregivers
- when members of your care team come into your room

You can only remove your mask if you are physically distanced from others in the following areas:

- inpatient room (i.e. when you are eating or sleeping)
- family lounges on the 3rd floor
- cafeteria
- reflection room
- bathroom
- outside (i.e. Spiral Garden, outdoor terraces on the 3rd floor)

Physical distancing is not required between you and your loved one (i.e. you do not need to wear masks around each other) unless if/when they are receiving aerosol generating medical procedures. Ask your care team if this applies to you and your loved one.

Why didn't Holland Bloorview follow other hospitals in starting masking earlier?

During a pandemic, Holland Bloorview follows directions from Public Health. Public Health first directed acute care hospitals to enforce the masking policy. We received the order to mask late evening on Wednesday, March 25 and have implemented our masking policy as soon as possible.

Why doesn't my loved one need to wear a mask?

Our inpatient clients are not wearing masks as everyone around them is already wearing PPE. The masks are meant to prevent potential spread of the virus that may have been contracted from the community. Not all children can tolerate wearing a mask and may touch their faces more frequently, especially if the mask is too big. There is greater risk associated with children putting their hands to their face, due to the mask being loose or causing discomfort, with potentially unclean hands.

What is the evidence behind masking? If masks are meant to be preserved and families will be putting them on and taking them off throughout the day, won't the masks cause greater risk for picking up and spreading the virus?

Masking someone who may potentially be infectious or sick with the virus can protect those around them from getting the virus. Instructions on how to put on and take off the mask is meant to decrease the risk of spreading infections.

When taking off the mask, remove it by the elastic ear loops – do not touch the front of the mask. When you have to take the mask off, it is important to place it on a clean surface or paper towel, with the inside of the mask facing up. When putting the mask back on, first wash your hands, then pick up the

mask and place it over your nose and mouth and adjust to fit. Then wash your hands again. Try to avoid touching the outside of the mask – if you do, wash your hands.

On April 3, the hospital announced its efforts to preserve and conserve masks – both for staff and family caregivers.

Offering families disposable masks seem wasteful given the shortages reported across the health system. Why aren't families allowed to use cloth or other reusable masks?

Homemade masks are not medical devices and have not been tested to recognized standards. These types of masks may not be useful in blocking virus particles that may spread by coughing, sneezing or certain medical procedures. They do not provide offer protection from COVID-19 because of a potential loose fit and materials used.

However, you are welcome to wear homemade masks outside of Holland Bloorview. As per the recommendation by Dr. Theresa Tam, Canada's Chief Public Health Officer, homemade masks can be worn out in the community as an additional measure to help protect others around you. This is especially important if you are a potential carrier of the virus but are not showing any symptoms (i.e. "asymptomatic" or "pre-symptomatic").

We are beginning to receive donated cloth masks from the community. Please ask front desk reception if you wish to have one.

How can we best preserve the life of the masks we are given?

When family caregivers engage in daily screening here, if your mask is still suitable to wear (i.e. isn't visibly soiled, isn't moist or difficult to breathe in), we ask that you please re-use it and let your screener know that you don't need a new mask.

To help conserve your mask when not in use, especially if and when you leave the hospital to return home, we suggest preserving your mask, if still suitable to wear, in a paper bag. These are available at the screening desks.

A reminder that when you're ready to dispose of your mask, please place it in the appropriately marked bins and then thoroughly wash or sanitize your hands.

What happens if the mask provided to me is loose?

It has come to our attention that for some family members, the masks we provide at the screening desks do not fit as well as they could. Unfortunately due to limitations in supply we are unable to secure smaller masks. Our infection prevention and control team suggests the following to ensure a better fit:

- Tie a knot at the end of each of the two ear loops to make them shorter, so that the mask fits securely on your face and is no longer loose.

- We can also provide ear savers that will also help the mask fit securely on your face and is no longer loose. These will be available at the screening desks where the screening staff can share instructions on how to use them.

School supports

What school supports are available for my child?

We've secured supports for virtual schooling if your loved one's teacher and/or school are unable to help you. Note that the Bloorview School Authority will not be able to register new students until schools are re-open. Areas of support include:

- how to use the online learning platform
- how to solve technology issues
- help with organizing and scheduling school lessons and school work

Feel free to contact:

- BIRT unit – Aparna Massey at ext. 3488
- CCC or SODR units – Sheri McClement at ext. 3631 or 416-999-4076

The Family Caregiver Business Centre is now open in room 4W415. Families can access a computer, internet, and printer. For health and safety reasons, only 2 people can be in the room at a time. You must wear a mask if there is another person in the room.

Activities for inpatient families and caregivers

Can we get access to a gym to exercise and stay active?

- The Bloorview School Authority gym is available for use twice a week. Until further notice, the therapeutic recreation team is offering supervised family gym time on Tuesday mornings (9:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.) and Thursday afternoons (2:30 p.m. – 3:45 p.m.).
- Family caregivers have access to the inpatient family lounge and laundry area, therapy areas, cafeteria, Spiral Garden outdoors, and other common areas within the hospital, such as the Atrium.
- As the weather improves, we hope that neighbourhood walks will be a consistent option available to family caregivers.

What options exist for adult interaction, social ways to connect with other families safely?

Inpatient Parent Talks are for any caregivers on the inpatient unit who would like to connect with each other and a Family Mentor in a group setting. Family Mentors are parents of former clients and volunteers who draw from their lived experience with childhood disability to provide peer support to current clients and families.

Groups usually take place in person, but we will be adapting to virtual meetings over Zoom. Posters will be distributed on the units so that you know where to join online. To find out when future inpatient caregiver events are happening, or if you have questions, please e-mail Melissa Ngo at mngo@hollandbloorview.ca.

Keeping updated and staying connected to a child or loved one

I'm having trouble connecting to the guest internet when onsite at the hospital. What is being done to increase the speed and access?

Many families have provided feedback on the quality and availability of connection to the hospital's guest internet service. We have heard your feedback and installed three new wireless access points across the inpatient units. You should experience improved access to guest internet within the coming days.

Families will soon have access to a business office equipped with a computer, internet access and printer. We are in the final stages of setting up this space and will provide an updated location in the coming days.

How else can I connect with my child or loved one if I'm not the designated family caregiver on a particular day?

iPads

To help stay connected with your child or loved one, we are making iPads available on the units. We understand that this will not replace being there in-person, but we will continue to do what we can to enable ways to connect you with your child or loved one at this time. The iPads will be disinfected regularly to prevent any potential spread of germs. Children and family caregivers are required to thoroughly wash their hands before and after use.

Window visits

Until further notice, we are happy to make window visits possible through the Bloorview School Authority on the main floor (1W165 & 1W135). Families must book their 30-minute timeslot with a unit secretary 24 hours in advance, as designated staff (e.g. trach/vent trained CCC staff) may be required to accompany the client. Please note that the rooms in use will be cleaned twice a day to prevent the spread of germs. As a courtesy to other families, after your visit, please use the wipes provided to clean any surfaces that you or your loved one may have touched e.g. windows and tables in the space. Also, to protect you from sun and rain, umbrellas are available for loan through front reception.

Additional information for staff: time slots are assigned to ensure equity amongst all inpatient caregiver requests and at a first-come, first-serve basis. The unit secretary will give a confirmed appointment ticket to the caregiver identifying date, room and time.

Note: *Window visitations will not be allowed if HB is experiencing a Pandemic outbreak as an organization or at anytime safety is compromised as determined by Quality, Safety and Performance.*

If I am not onsite, how can I get regular updates on my child or loved one's status? What is the frequency of those updates?

To request regular updates on your child or loved one's progress, please connect with your social worker to develop a plan that will meet your family's needs.

As an additional resource, you can sign up for connect2care to access information on your child or loved one's clinical health record. Your care team can share details on how to use and access this online platform.

Is there an online hub where I can access the latest updates on how Holland Bloorview is managing the COVID-19 situation, specific to its inpatient population?

We are frequently posting information and updates related to how we're managing COVID-19 on the "News" section of our website at hollandbloorview.ca . The best place to receive information specifically related to inpatient care is through the inpatient letters. We also have a COVID-19 FAQ prepared specifically for inpatient families that we'd be happy to share with you.