

TITLE

ASSESSING PATIENTS PRESENTING WITH FEBRILE NEUTROPENIA DURING COVID-19

SCOPE

Provincial

DOCUMENT

HCS-258

APPROVAL AUTHORITY

Emergency Coordination Centre

INITIAL EFFECTIVE DATE

April 28, 2020

SPONSOR

CancerControl Alberta;
Senior Medical Officer of Health

REVISION EFFECTIVE DATE

Not applicable

PARENT DOCUMENT TITLE, TYPE, AND NUMBER

N/A

SCHEDULED REVIEW DATE

April 28, 2021

NOTE: The first appearance of terms in bold in the body of this document (except titles) are defined terms – please refer to the Definitions section.

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OBJECTIVES

- To provide direction to **health care professionals** on the clinical assessment of **patients** with Febrile Neutropenia (FN) (as usually defined), either as initial presentation or complication of chemotherapy, in Alberta Health Services (AHS) health care sites during COVID-19.

APPLICABILITY

Compliance with this document is required by all Alberta Health Services employees, members of the medical and midwifery staffs, students, volunteers, and other persons acting on behalf of Alberta Health Services (including contracted service providers as necessary).

ELEMENTS**1. Points of Emphasis**

- 1.1 Health care professionals shall follow AHS Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) Recommendations and don and doff personal protective equipment (PPE), as appropriate. Refer to the [AHS Interim Recommendations COVID-19](#).
- 1.2 Initial patient assessment can occur through a virtual health appointment, but shall ultimately occur in person, consistent with good clinical practice. Consultation shall be in accordance with all applicable privacy legislation.

2. Clinical Assessment

- 2.1 Clinical assessment shall include:
- a) [Point of Care Risk Assessment \(PCRA\)](#) for any of the five additional COVID-19 associated symptoms; and
 - b) epidemiologic assessment for possible COVID-19 exposure including:
 - (i) out of country travel;
 - (ii) association with a person known to have Influenza Like Illness (ILI) symptoms or COVID-19 diagnosis;
 - (iii) employment in a workplace with known COVID-19 transmission;
or
 - (iv) residence in any continuing care setting, whether or not COVID-19 is known to occur in that setting.
- 2.2 PCRA shall be performed by both the Most Responsible Physician (MRP) (and delegate) and in the initial nursing assessment. Both assessments shall be documented on the patient's **health record**.
- 2.3 For FN patients admitted with negative PCRA, the PCRA symptom review and epidemiologic assessment for possible COVID-19 exposure should be repeated every six (6) hours (Q6H) as per Section 2.1 above.
- 2.4 For FN patients with positive PCRA (clinical or epidemiologic, determined by either nursing or MRP initial assessment), the patient shall be immediately masked and triaged to contact and droplet isolation ([Cohorting Inpatients on Additional Precautions](#)). A nasopharyngeal (NP) swab should be taken to test for COVID-19. The patient shall remain on contact and droplet precautions until IPC discontinuation requirements are met (e.g. the patient meets criteria for removal of precautions).
- a) **Informed consent** is required prior to completing the NP swab.
- 2.5 When both nursing and MRP have determined a negative PCRA on the patient (both clinical and epidemiologic), it is at the discretion of the MRP to perform a nasopharyngeal swab and/or initiate contact and droplet isolation precautions.
- a) The exception to the above applies when a Medical Officer of Health has issued a patient specific order requiring the swab pursuant to the *Public Health Act* (s.39 and 44), which would be unlikely for a newly symptomatic patient.

DEFINITIONS

Health care professional means an individual who is a member of a regulated health discipline, as defined by the *Health Disciplines Act* (Alberta) or the *Health Professions Act* (Alberta), and who practices within scope and role.

Health record means the collection of all records documenting individually identifying health information in relation to a single person.

Informed consent means the patient's agreement (or alternate decision-maker) to undergo a treatment/procedure after being provided, in a manner the patient can understand, with the relevant information about the nature of the treatment/procedure(s), its benefits, potential risks and alternatives, and the potential consequences of refusal.

Patient means an adult or child who receives or has requested health care or services from Alberta Health Services and its health care providers or individuals authorized to act on behalf of Alberta Health Services. This term is inclusive of residents, clients and outpatients.

Point of care risk assessment (PCRA) means the health care worker evaluation of the likelihood of exposure to an infectious agent, for a specific interaction with a specific patient in a specific environment. The health care worker makes decisions such as patient room placement and choice of personal protective equipment based on the PCRA.

REFERENCES

- Alberta Health Services Resources:
 - *Cohorting Inpatients on Additional Precautions*
 - *Interim IPC Recommendations COVID-19*
 - *Point Of Care Risk Assessment*
- Non-Alberta Health Services Resources:
 - *Freedom of information and Protection of Privacy Act* (Alberta)
 - *Health Information Act* (Alberta)

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