



## Background

Previously, testing criteria for COVID-19 in the Saskatchewan Health Authority (SHA) was limited to testing patients with symptoms compatible with COVID-19, those who have been travelling or individuals who have been in close contact with someone who was COVID-19 positive. Additionally, patients who screened positive upon admission (i.e. who were symptomatic or met exposure criteria) were placed on Droplet/Contact Plus precautions. These measures have helped us to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in our facilities and keep our HCWs, visitors and patients safe.

## Principles

Starting June 5, 2020, the SHA will offer testing to all patients for COVID-19 upon admission or in advance of a planned admission to an acute care hospital with an anticipated stay of greater than 24 hours (this includes all expectant mothers entering a facility to give birth). Expanding the testing criteria to include both symptomatic and asymptomatic patients may provide a better understanding of the prevalence of COVID-19 across the province and allow identification asymptomatic or mildly symptomatic patients who may still spread the virus to others. This will be especially important as Saskatchewan begins to lift restrictions and begin resumption of services plans within acute care facilities.

## Guidelines

- All patients admitted to an acute care hospital for a stay greater than 24 hours will be offered a test for COVID-19. This includes all expectant mothers entering a health facility to give birth (Refer to [CV-19 WS0010 Admission, In-Facility Placement and Discontinuing COVID-19 Precautions](#)).
- All patients will be **screened** for COVID-19 upon admission.
- **The decision to place patients on Droplet/Contact Plus precautions will be based on the results of the screening tool.** Only patients who **screen** positive will be placed on Droplet/Contact Plus precautions. Awaiting test results is not an indication for precautions. (Refer to [CV-19 A0001 Acute Care Placement and Precautions Algorithm](#)).
- Patients who are symptomatic or asymptomatic but meet screening criteria, including those who have been travelling or individuals who have been in close contact with someone who was COVID-19 positive should be placed in a private room. If private rooms are limited or unavailable, refer to [CV-19 G0041 Interim IPAC Guidance for Acute Care Settings](#) for guidance.
- Patients should continue to be monitored for symptoms of COVID-19 for the duration of their hospital stay. A negative test result only applies at the time of the test. A patient could develop symptoms and test positive the next day, or at any time after the specimen was taken and tested. If symptoms develop, refer to [CV-19 A0002 Modification of Precautions for COVID-19 Negative Inpatient/Residents Algorithm](#) for re-testing instructions.

## Resources:

<https://www.saskatchewan.ca/government/news-and-media/2020/may/14/covid-19-update-may-14>