



# Point of Care Risk Assessment At a Glance

## Health PEI

INFECTION PREVENTION AND CONTROL

May 2023

Healthcare workers have a responsibility to assess the risk for themselves and others prior to all caregiving interactions.

The point of care risk assessment (PCRA) should be based on sound clinical judgement considering the patient/resident/or client’s clinical condition (physical, emotional, and mental state) availability of personal protective equipment (PPE) as well as policy, guidelines, structure and administrative direction.

Any patient/resident/client may carry potential risks for introducing, transmitting infections or becoming infected themselves within service delivery: from patient/resident/client to healthcare worker (HCW), from HCW to client, or from client to client. **If the patient/resident/client’s illness/condition requires additional precautions to be taken while providing their care, the referring facility/organization should inform the receiving facility at the time of referral or transfer.**



“Healthcare workers should routinely perform PCRA’s many times a day to apply control measures for their safety and the safety of patients and others in the healthcare environment” (PHAC, 2017)

### Principles of PCRA

- ✓ Links in the chain of infection
- ✓ Screening for illness
- ✓ Variables influencing transmission of microorganisms (exposure, susceptibility, how to reduce risk)
- ✓ Characteristics of microorganisms (reservoirs, infectivity, mode of transmission, incubation, communicability, virulence)
- ✓ Patient care(s) that may contribute to exposure of microorganisms
- ✓ Environmental circumstances
- ✓ Level of risk and how to mitigate risk of transmission
- ✓ How to consult ICP (Infection Control Professional) with concerns/questions
- ✓ Control measures that may differ with different microorganisms in different settings

### PCRA Application

**Assessment** is the fundamental step in implementing practice. The assessment of risk before each patient/resident/client interaction while considering events, circumstances and practices is necessary for implementing appropriate PPE practices when caring for yourself and others.

**Risk factors to consider as part of your PCRA include:**

1. Infected source (evaluate the nature of symptoms and environment)
2. Susceptible host (has risk for infection increased or decreased)

PCRA should lead to the appropriate selection of PPE to be used during patient/residents/client’s care. If unable to complete a PCRA prior to the visit due to an unforeseen barrier, the initial screening should be completed at the doorway or at a 2-meter (6 feet) distance.

## PCRA consideration(s)

### Assessing the Patient/Resident/Client and/or their environment

1. Who is present in the care setting (is there room for spatial separation)?
  - Assess the presence of visitors within the room/home
  - When possible, only those necessary for communication or assistance should be in the same room.
2. Screening results produced by patient/resident/client and household members?
  - Illness or Infestations identified (e.g., TB, influenza, scabies, head lice)?
3. Does the patient/resident/client appear to be feeling unwell?
4. Is there a risk of exposure to blood, body fluids, respiratory secretions, excretions, non-intact skin, mucous membranes, body tissues, or contaminated equipment (splashes/sprays)?
5. Does the patient/resident/client have any symptoms of infection requiring additional precautions (cough, sneeze, fever, diarrhea, vomiting, rash, draining wounds, malaise, redness, swelling or pain in a specific body area)?
  - Is your patient/resident/client continent? If incontinent, are the excretions well contained?
6. Is appropriate PPE available with knowledge of proper use?
7. Are they able to maintain good hygiene? (Hand, respiratory, environment)
8. Are there movement limitations within the home?
9. Aerosol Generating Medical Procedures (AGMP)
  - Does your patient/resident/client have a requirement/need (e.g., nebulizers)?
  - Is there potential for exposure?
    - AGMP(s) occurring prior to care shall be communicated to staff



## Assess yourself

- Self-Screening: How are you feeling?
- What type of contact are you going to have with the patient/resident/client?
- What task/procedure are you going to perform?
- Is your personal attire clean, safe, and enough for care delivery?
- Awareness of your immune status?
- Can you avoid touching the mucous membranes of your eyes, nose and mouth?
- Is more protective equipment needed?

### Did you know?

Early identification of infection prevention and control issues, in conjunction with education for the client and family, is an essential component of infection prevention and control (Public Health Ontario, Provincial Infectious Diseases Advisory Committee [PIDAC], 2012).

**If additional information is required, please contact your Infection Control Professional.**