

# COVID-19 SUMMARY GUIDANCE #3

## Community pharmacy procedures

### Public areas

1. Access to products on self-selection by customers should be restricted to avoid multiple people touching these products. Whenever possible, they should be accessed only by pharmacy personnel.
2. Frequently clean and disinfect all patient service counters and patient contact areas. Discontinue the use of magazines and other shared items in pharmacy waiting areas.
3. Limit the number of patients in the pharmacy at any given time to prevent crowding at the pharmacy counter or checkout areas. In case this limit is reached, patients and customers should be asked to wait their turn outside the pharmacy. In any case, patients/customers should keep a distance of 1–2 metres between them while waiting in the queue.

### At the counter

1. Whenever possible, allocate one employee per station or location at the counter and avoid swaps. Try not to share offices and other supplies, such as pens or staplers.
2. All pharmacy staff at the counter should wear a face mask .. Face shields may also be used (in combination with masks), especially if counter-top plastic shields are not available.
3. Keep only essential objects at the counter.
4. Wipe and disinfect the counter and payment terminals after each customer/patient.
5. Have an alcohol-based solution available to disinfect hands after attending to each patient/customer. Avoid touching objects that have been handled by patients.
6. Where possible, encourage patients to order their medicines through the pharmacy's webpage or other electronic communication methods (depending on the jurisdiction) and delivered to their home or work place. As stated above, this service should not be provided without the appropriate pharmaceutical care by telepharmacy (by phone or internet call).
7. Avoid handling insurance or benefit cards. Instead, have the patient take a picture of the card for processing or read aloud the information that is needed (when possible).

### Social distancing

1. Limit the number of patients/customers entering the pharmacy at any one time.
2. Keep a distance of at least 1-2 metres (preferably more) when attending to a patient.
3. If necessary, use a tray to collect prescriptions, hand over medicines and process any payment in order keep this distance.
4. Advise patients to keep a distance of at least 1-2 metres between them while waiting, and use marking tape on the floor to indicate where they should stand.

### Visiting a pharmacy

1. Advise patients/customers to avoid long stays in the pharmacy.
2. Advise patients/customers to avoid visiting the pharmacy if they are elderly or have co-morbidities. Whenever possible, such patients should ask a family member, a caretaker, a friend or a neighbour to go to the pharmacy instead of them if telephone or online refill requests cannot be made.

### Recommendations for pharmaceutical services and activities in the pharmacy

1. When performing point-of-care tests (e.g., measurement of blood pressure, cholesterol, glycaemia, pregnancy tests), administering vaccines or injectables, or providing any other services that require direct contact with a patient, additional protective measures should be taken, such as the use of a face shield combined with a mask, gloves and goggles, as appropriate.

2. These services may need to be restricted or interrupted if they could pose a risk to the health of the team (e.g., if the patient has symptoms of respiratory infection).

#### **Recommendations for the pharmacy team**

1. Employees with conditions that compromise their immune system should use masks at all times and preferably perform back office tasks. Hand hygiene measures should be reinforced.
2. Personnel with symptoms or with recent contact with suspected or positive COVID-19 patients should stay at home and seek testing for possible COVID-19 infection.
3. Employees should change coats more often.
4. Wearing accessories, such as bracelets, watches and rings, should be avoided.
5. When putting on or taking off a mask, hygiene and disinfection of the hands should be performed before and after.
6. Long hair or beards may reduce the efficiency of masks.
7. Frequently touched objects and surfaces, such as workstations, keyboards, telephones, and doorknobs, should be cleaned and disinfected frequently. A cleaning protocol should be in place and enforced.
8. The safe use, manipulation, and disposal of PPE should be instructed to personnel.