

April 2, 2020

Good morning everyone,

I hope everyone is holding up ok this week and again I can't thank everyone enough for their hard work to keep everyone safe during this difficult time. I want to re-assure everyone that I am on the phone with the Health Unit frequently and I receive updates daily with any changes to safety that need to be implemented.

Below are some updates and answers to frequently asked questions that I have been receiving this week.

How Covid-19 is transmitted

COVID-19 cases and clusters demonstrate that Droplet/Contact transmission are the routes of transmission.

The majority of cases are linked to person-to-person transmission through close direct contact with someone who is positive for COVID-19.

There is NO evidence that COVID-19 is transmitted through the airborne route.

Aerosol-Generating Medical Procedures

Performing an aerosol-generating medical procedure (AGMP) can generate aerosols capable of being inhaled and capable of spreading further in the air than respiratory droplets. Please make sure you are wearing a mask and goggles/safety glasses if you are assisting someone supported with CPAP, Suction, and Nebulizers. This should be performed in a single room with the door closed.

Fecal Matter

There is some new evidence that shows that Covid-19 could be spread through fecal matter from an infected person through contact. Example: Touching your nose, mouth or eyes with gloves or hands that have fecal matter on them. Please make sure the when you are providing personal care you are disposing of fecal matter properly and that you are doing proper hand washing and disinfecting after. Please ensure the toilet, toilet handles, sinks and faucets are being disinfected in bathrooms after each use.

Hospitals

We are trying to avoid taking people supported to hospital unless absolutely necessary. If there is a medical emergency, we will be calling an ambulance to have the person supported assessed and a decision will be made from there. Please contact your manager in these situations. If a staff member ends up having to go to hospital with a person supported please get direction from Nicole Morassut on proper precautions that need to be followed at hospital.

Cleaning

Please follow the cleaning instructions that are written in the Routine Practices/Infection Control Covid-19 procedure that was sent out on Friday. We contacted the Health Unit regarding the use of J-cloths for cleaning. They have confirmed that they are ok to use for cleaning instead of paper towels and that they can be washed and re-used. Because paper towels break down more easily than J Cloths when saturated, the J Cloths will do a more thorough job of disinfecting several surfaces.

Hand Washing

We also confirmed with the Health Unit that it is a safe practice to use a hand towels to dry your hands after hand washing if there is a hand towel assigned to each staff and it is washed at the end of each shift. Please review the Routine Practices/Infection Control Covid-19 procedure regarding proper hand washing techniques.

Hand Sanitizer

We received a donation of hand sanitizer today and we will start distributing this to the homes. **Please do not throw out the bottles** as we can dispense more hand sanitizer in them. Hand washing is the best practice to use over hand sanitizer, but you can use hand sanitizer if your hands are not soiled and you can't get to a sink.

Touching Face, Eyes, nose and Mouth

It is very important that we avoid touching our faces, eyes, nose and mouths with unwashed hands. Covid-19 is spread through contact. If you touch a surface that is contaminated with Covid-19 and then touch your face, eyes, nose or mouth you could contract Covid-19.

Social-Distancing

It is very important to try and keep a distance of 2 metres (6 feet) from others and stay home when sick. I know this is very hard to do when we are supporting people but please try to maintain this distance as much as possible. It is also important that the people we support try to maintain this distance for themselves also. **This is one of the most important practices that needs to be followed along with hand washing and disinfecting of high touch surfaces to prevent the spread of Covid-19.**

Footwear

There was a question asked to me about wearing shoes in the homes. I spoke to the Health Unit and they informed me that there is no threat of transmitting Covid-19 by wearing your shoes in the homes. It would be great if staff could have a pair of shoes that are designated specifically for the home to be extra cautious, but it is not a requirement as of right now. We do recommend that if there is someone supported that may get around the home on the floor to have a change of shoes for those locations.

Shift Changes

We are asking employees to **do shift changes as quickly as possible with minimal contact between staff**. Please maintain 6 feet of distance between staff at shift change so that there is no potential for

contact between staff. Staff need to ensure information for the incoming staff is communicated through the Communication Logs on Aims. If there is something that was forgotten, or you need to explain to the staff you can give them a call from your vehicle before driving home.

Food

We understand that it is difficult that you cannot order food or go through drive thru's right now. Staff are allowed to bring extra food to the home and store it just in case they get stuck for shifts. Please work with your manager to figure out what the best place would be to store staff's food. Let's try and be respectful as to what we bring into the home if a person we support has food limitations.

OT & Stat holiday banks

We understand that it is difficult to get time off right now during this pandemic. Some employees OT banks and Stat holidays are expiring and would normally be paid out automatically. We are going to stop the system from automatically paying these out during the pandemic. Staff can keep that time in their banks to be used on a later date. If you would like it paid out instead of it staying in your bank please inform your manager.