

COVID-19 UPDATE

Keeping You Safe



To: All Hospital Staff and Professional Staff

From: Dr. Stewart Kennedy, COVID-19 Incident Manager

Date: May 29, 2020

RE: Critical Gown Shortages

Your health & safety is my priority. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, the Incident Management Team has closely monitored Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) supplies. Recommendations for PPE conservation and extended use are issued in line with those of Ontario Health. In addition, the Logistics Team applies all methods available to procure more PPE supplies of both disposable and reusable products. The Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee is engaged to provide ideas to conserve PPE, and strategy discussions with our Union Partners will take place next week. Despite these efforts, our Hospital's PPE inventory continues to drop, as a result of international shortages.

The isolation gown supply is reaching critical levels. This is a temporary issue; we are expecting delivery of reusable gowns. To enhance PPE conservation at critical supply levels, a tiered response has been developed by Infection Control and approved by the Incident Management Team (IMT). Based on current inventory, **today we are implementing Level 1 and Level 2 of our Critical Gown Shortages Strategy.**

Level 1 Response:

- Do not wear a gown in contact isolation rooms unless contact with the patient and/or their environment is likely to occur.

Level 2 Response:

- Increase cohorting of MRSA and VRE patients, including MRSA-contacts and VRE-contacts. Use one gown for each set of cohorted patients (i.e., one gown for both patients in a semi-private, one gown for all patients in a ward room);
- Logistics to escalate inventory request to Ontario Health North per the 14day supply guidelines;
- IMT review of services for possible PPE reduction.

Patient Flow and Infection Control will begin to cohort patients that meet the above criteria today and staff and professional staff are asked to use one gown for each set of cohorted patients. As well, IMT is reviewing the service provision plans to ensure minimal impact on PPE supplies.

In-patients who are under precautions and are being transferred to Diagnostic Imaging (DI) will no longer wear a yellow isolation gown. PPE guidelines for transport are outlined in the below table. DI processes ensure staff are aware of precautions and clinical staff are to inform Porters prior to transport.

COVID-19 UPDATE

Keeping You Safe



Thunder Bay Regional
Health Sciences
Centre

| PRECAUTION | PPE REQUIRED |
|---|--|
| AIRBORNE/DROPLET (Blue sign) | <u>Patient wears:</u> Procedure mask <u>Transport Staff wears:</u> N95 mask, eye protection |
| DROPLET (White sign) | <u>Patient wears:</u> Procedure mask if can tolerate <u>Transport staff wears:</u> procedure mask, eye protection |
| CONTACT (Green, Pink or Orange sign) | Ensure all skin lesions are covered prior to transport |

Please continue to practice the other conservation strategies in place throughout the pandemic such as limiting the number of times entering a room where use of PPE is required.

Thank you your commitment and dedication to preserving PPE.

For more information, please contact your supervisor.

All Hospital COVID-19 updates are available on the iNtranet at <https://comms.tbrhsc.net/covid-19-information/>.