

COVID-19 POSITIVE PATIENT DIAGNOSTIC IMAGING ALGORITHM

For use with a patient confirmed positive for COVID-19 who needs diagnostic imaging for another underlying condition.

Step 1 – Consult Healthlink 811. If unable to get through to 811 contact: phc@ahs.ca (for non-urgent questions)

Step 2 – Once COVID-19 laboratory has confirmed a positive test for your patient with an unrelated condition:

- Primary care – Virtual consult/telephone consult is the first step. Advice is available through RAAPID on 403-944-4486 and Specialist Link on 403-910-2551.
- For nonurgent/nonemergent issues – **if it can wait, it should wait.**
- Urgent matter – Stable patient, but DI/lab will alter management, options include:
 - EMS Mobile Integrated Healthcare Program – Community paramedic Visit
 - Office Visit – Use PPE
 - If diagnostic imaging is required in the community:
 - Mayfair Diagnostics provides imaging (X-ray only) of COVID-19-positive patients at our South Calgary Health location.
 - Phone clinic in advance to alert them that the patient has a COVID-19 diagnosis at 403-873-2336.
 - Please instruct the patient to notify the clinic by phone when they have arrived to identify themselves prior to entering the clinic
 - Clearly indicate COVID-19 positive status on the requisition.
 - If feasible, provide your patient with a surgical mask and direct them to wear it.
- Emergent matters – e.g., surgical indication or unstable patient:
 - Referral to AHS facility.
 - Patients sent to AHS hospital sites only if specialist care and/or admission required.
 - Contact RAAPID (refer to phone number on page 2) for advice/assistance with patient triage.
 - EMS activation
 - Emergency department admittance
 - Direct admittance

Confirmed COVID19 cases – worsening disease status:

- Specialist consultation – internal medicine, respiratory medicine, and infectious disease.
- Disease progression may be rapid especially in elderly patients and those with pre-existing medical conditions.
- Respiratory distress or hypoxia is primary reason for escalation.

Role of diagnostic imaging for COVID-19:

- Chest X-ray and chest CT are not for diagnosis of COVID-19 and cannot be used to exclude COVID-19 infection.
- CT is used only in the hospital setting to look for complications.
- Chest X-rays are not routinely used for patient triage at this time.

Summary:

- Diagnostic imaging of COVID-19 positive patients can be performed in the community as long as certain pre-requisite conditions are met.
- **If imaging can wait, it should wait.**
 - Ask yourself: how will this diagnostic imaging study change patient management?
- Consider consultation with Respiratory Medicine or Infectious Disease Specialists for advice on how to manage and triage patients with worsening respiratory status.
 - Consider using AHS Regional On-Call Directory.
- Is patient unstable (hypoxia or respiratory distress) or requiring a hospital admission?
 - If YES → refer to AHS using the pathway above; do not delay or increase exposure by work-up in the community.

Guidelines are subject to change with the rapidly evolving pandemic. Regularly check these online resources for primary care specific information for health professionals:

- **AHS Information for Primary Care Providers novel coronavirus (COVID-19)**
 - <https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/topics/Page16956.aspx>
- **Information for AHS Staff & Health Professionals novel coronavirus (COVID-19)**
 - <https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/topics/Page16947.aspx>
- **EMS Mobile Integrated Healthcare Program (Community Paramedic)**
 - <https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/ems/Page16487.aspx>
 - Toll Free: 1-855-491-5868
 - Fax: 403-776-3835
 - Email: ATRSouth@ahs.ca
- **RAAPID South (Referral, Access, Advice, Placement, Information & Destination)**
 - <https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/info/Page13345.aspx>
 - Tel: 403-944-44
 - Toll free: 1-800-661-1700
 - Email: raapid@ahs.ca
- **Specialist Link** (Monday to Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., excluding statutory holidays. Call-back within one hour)
 - specialistlink.ca
 - Tel: 403.910.2551
 - Toll-free: 1.844.962.5456
 - Online: specialistlink.ca