

Q&As – Personal Protective Equipment Supply – 2019 Novel Coronavirus

1. What is the Ministry of Health doing to ensure providers have the personal protective equipment (PPE) they need to deal with increased demand from the 2019 novel coronavirus?

- The ministry wants to ensure providers have PPE supplies at the right time and in the right place, based on evidence, to deal with increased demand.
- The ministry is working with health sector partners to understand PPE inventories across the health system, and have begun to collect information from public health units, hospitals, emergency services, long-term care, home and community care and interprofessional primary care teams, as a start.
- We are also working with manufacturers and supply chain organizations to understand their approach and available inventories and are in touch almost daily.
- Our goal is to make appropriate use of existing supplies to maintain the valuable use of them when it is most necessary.

2. How can we flag concerns related to PPE for the ministry?

- Please get in touch with any questions, feedback or concerns about PPE at EOClogistics.moh@ontario.ca.
- We are hearing from you through our email address about concerns about PPE supply, and we're following these up to identify critical issues.

3. As a clinician or health service provider, what should change in the way I provide care – both to protect frontline staff and patients?

- We have shared guidance documents that outline evidence-based recommended PPE approaches.
- For acute care treatment, emergency health services, and when doing testing for patients who are identified as suspected cases of novel coronavirus, the ministry recommends the use of N95 respirators.
- The use of these respirators should be driven by the risk to occupational health and safety posed by the treatment of the patient in question.

- We are also recommending that wherever possible, patients be screened remotely, at a distance, or by phone and then referred to local public health if they require testing.
- We encourage organizations to put in place policies and procedures to ensure that existing supplies are secured and that their use is prioritized to those involved in direct patient care for probable or confirmed cases.

4. What is the Ministry of Health doing to understand the PPE supply across the health system?

- The ministry is working with health sector partners to understand PPE inventories across the health system.
- We are also working with manufacturers and supply chain organizations to understand their approach and available inventories and are in touch almost daily.
- We are receiving information through the EOClogistics.moh@ontario.ca email address regarding your concerns about PPE and are following up to make sure critical shortages are addressed.

5. Some of our PPE orders are back logged – how is the Ministry of Health dealing with this issue?

- Manufacturers are reviewing PPE orders on a case-by-case basis and are not filling orders automatically.
- That means that as health care organizations are putting in new, rush orders that are larger than you usually submit, you are being told that those orders are not being processed.
- We have been reassured that organizations will continue to get supplies in line with your usual usage patterns.
- We are also assured that manufacturers are prioritizing PPE orders where we have active cases or where there is critically short supply.
- Please make sure you are in touch through the EOClogistics.moh@ontario.ca email address if you have concerns about shortage of PPE.

6. Are we confident in the supply of PPE in Ontario?

- In engaging with our supply chain partners, we are confident that we have sufficient inventory across the province to respond to the situation on the ground today.
- We will work together to ensure that those who need these supplies have them when they need them.

- The ministry is continuing to work to secure additional supplies of PPE above and beyond existing inventories across the system.

7. Is this in line with what other countries are doing to prepare?

- Yes - we know from manufacturers that globally, the supply of PPE is being closely monitored, and is being directed to the areas of highest need.

8. What is clinically based stewardship for PPE?

- This Ministry of Health is encouraging PPE stewardship in the same way we practice Antibiotic Stewardship.
- Through this approach, we aim to make appropriate use of supplies to maintain the valuable use of them when it is most necessary.

9. When can we expect an update?

- We are planning to continue to share updates on PPE into a Frequently Answered Questions (FAQ) document with health system partners, and we will add to that as we have more information.
- We will provide more updates as we analyze the inventory data we will receive soon, and as we hear more from our supply chain partners.