

# Provincial Primary Care COVID-19 Pathway

\*Pathway is being continually reviewed and updated as required

Quick Links:

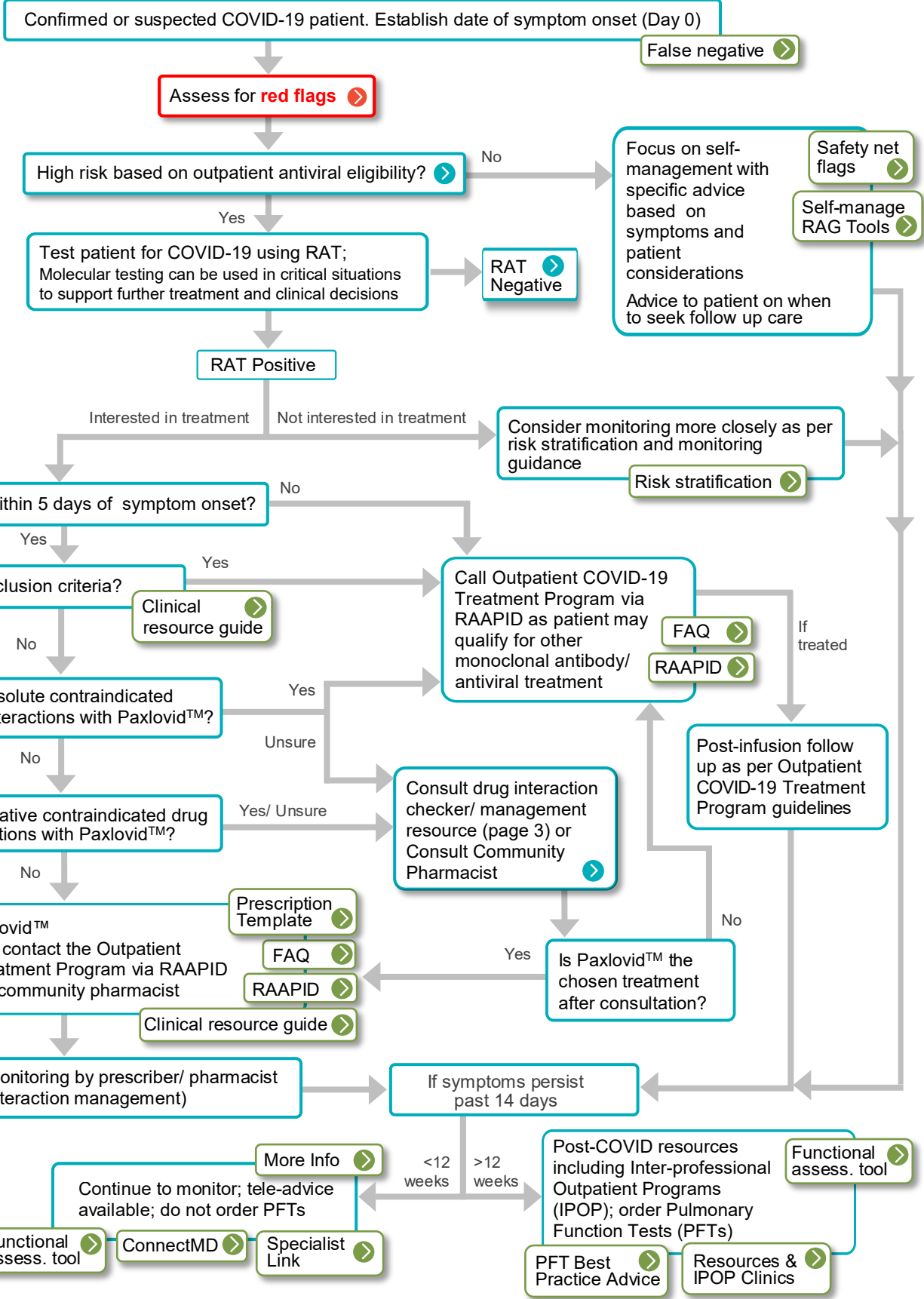
[Expanded Details](#)

[Provider Resources](#)

[Patient Resources](#)

Rapid deterioration is most common during the second week after symptom onset

Refer to the Viral Respiratory Illness Guidance for Community Providers



## EXPANDED DETAILS

This pathway is intended to be followed for patients who are confirmed or suspected COVID-19 positive.

The February 2023 changes to this pathway were made due to the following:

1. Pediatric Provincial Primary Care COVID-19 Pathway Discontinued July 2022
2. Updated resource links

### Additional Paxlovid™ exclusion criteria

- At this time, it is NOT recommended that Paxlovid™ treatment be extended or repeated should patients have rebound symptoms after completing a course of treatment.
- At this time, Paxlovid™ should NOT be considered a treatment for individuals experiencing symptoms of post-COVID. For more information, see [www.ahs.ca/assets/info/ppih/if-ppih-covid-19-paxlovid-faq-hcw.pdf](http://www.ahs.ca/assets/info/ppih/if-ppih-covid-19-paxlovid-faq-hcw.pdf)

### False negative rapid antigen test (RAT)

- New evidence indicates that swabbing of both mouth and nose is more effective for detecting COVID-19 when using a RAT. For more information, see [www.alberta.ca/rapid-testing-at-home.aspx](http://www.alberta.ca/rapid-testing-at-home.aspx)
- RAT can be falsely negative if tested early from symptom onset. People are most likely to be positive 2-4 days from symptom onset but can be positive on the day of symptom onset up to ~10 days. A repeat test can be done 24h from a negative to improve sensitivity.

### New medication to prevent COVID-19

Medication to treat and prevent COVID-19 evolves on a continual basis. For more information, see [COVID-19 Outpatient Treatment | www.ahs.ca/topics/Page17753.aspx](#)



## Clinical risk stratification

High risk	Average risk	Lower risk
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Patients with any of the safety net flags</li> <li>• Patients with symptom deterioration</li> <li>• Any age with medical comorbidities</li> <li>• Age &gt; 60 years old</li> <li>• Pregnancy</li> <li>• Any age who is immunocompromised</li> <li>• Not fully vaccinated**</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 40-60 years old with no medical comorbidities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Otherwise healthy</li> <li>• No comorbidities</li> <li>• No safety net flags</li> <li>• Age 1-39 years old with no medical comorbidities</li> </ul>

\* For example: lung disease, heart disease, hypertension, diabetes, kidney disease, liver disease, dementia, stroke, obesity, cancer. Source: [www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/publications/diseases-conditions/people-high-risk-for-severe-illness-covid-19.html](http://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/publications/diseases-conditions/people-high-risk-for-severe-illness-covid-19.html)

\*\* Definition of fully vaccinated and partially vaccinated: [www.ahs.ca/assets/info/ppih/if-ppih-covid-19-primary-care-guidance.pdf](http://www.ahs.ca/assets/info/ppih/if-ppih-covid-19-primary-care-guidance.pdf) (Page 6)

## Monitoring

- Tailor monitoring according to clinical risk stratification and assessment
- The frequency and duration of follow-up will depend on the risk for severe disease, the severity of symptoms, and the patient's ability to self-report worsening symptoms.

Source: [www.covid19treatmentguidelines.nih.gov/management/clinical-management/nonhospitalized-patients--general-management](http://www.covid19treatmentguidelines.nih.gov/management/clinical-management/nonhospitalized-patients--general-management)

## Safety net flags

- Limited/no access to phone/tablet/computer devices for virtual health
- Limited/no access to transportation
- Socially isolated (Lives alone, unable to meaningfully connect with others through technology, little to no social network)
- Lack of caregiver support if needed
- Inability to maintain hydration (Diarrhea, vomiting, cognitive impairment, poor fluid intake)
- Food/financial insecurity
- Receive homecare support
- Challenges with health literacy or ability to understand treatment recommendations or isolation expectations
- Unable to self-manage

## Isolation and quarantine information

- Visit [Isolation and quarantine requirements | Alberta.ca](https://www.alberta.ca/isolation-and-quarantine-requirements) for the most up-to-date information on isolation and quarantine.
- Respiratory hygiene practices (e.g. hand washing, covering your cough, social distancing, wearing a mask, etc.) continue to be strongly encouraged. Visit [COVID-19 Prevention & Protection | AHS](https://www.ahs.ca/covid-19-prevention-protection) for more information.



## Red flags

- Severe shortness of breath at rest
- Difficulty breathing
- Pain or pressure in chest
- Cold, clammy or pale mottled skin
- New onset of confusion
- Blue lips or face
- Becoming difficult to rouse
- Coughing up blood
- Reduced urine output
- Return of cough after period of improvement \*may signal development of COVID-19 pneumonia
- Return of fever after afebrile period \*may signal development of COVID-19 pneumonia
- Oxygen Saturation
  - Helpful tool to indicate disease severity when available
  - A new reading of < 92% - If previously healthy lungs or previously documented normal O2 sat
  - A new reading of < 90% - If underlying lung disease with documented low normal O2 sat at baseline
  - If patient on home oxygen normally and their O2 requirements increase with COVID-19 illness

## Additional red flags for maternity patients

- Orthopnea or paroxysmal nocturnal dyspnea (PND)
- Fever  $\geq 38^{\circ}\text{C}$  despite use of acetaminophen
- Weakness limiting activities of daily living (ADLs)
- Persistent nausea and vomiting > 12 hours
- Obstetrical complaints such as:
  - Regular uterine contractions
  - Ruptured membranes
  - Vaginal bleeding
  - Decreased fetal movement
- Oxygen Saturation
  - Helpful tool to indicate disease severity when available
  - A reading of <95% is a red flag for all pregnant women
  - If patient on home oxygen normally, and the O2 requirements increase with COVID-19 illness

## Red flags: more information

EMERGENT management	
<b>Clinical presentation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Patient has impaired level of consciousness</li><li>• Patient has severe respiratory distress (documented hypoxia, breathless at rest, unable to speak in short sentences)</li><li>• New weakness with inability to ambulate independently</li></ul>
<b>Available support and resources</b>	<b>Call 9-1-1</b>



URGENT management <1-hours assessment	
<b>Clinical presentation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Patient clinically stable (see Emergent Management criteria)</li> <li>• Patient may require hospitalization or transfer</li> </ul>
<b>Available support and resources</b>	<p><b>Call RAAPID</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• RAAPID North (for patients north of Red Deer): 1-800-282-9911 or 780-735-0811</li> <li>• RAAPID South (for patients in and south of Red Deer): 1-800-661-1700 or 403-944-4486</li> <li>• Website: <a href="#">RAAPID   Alberta Health Services</a></li> </ul>

SEMI-URGENT management <24-hour assessment in residence	
<b>Clinical presentation</b>	Patient needs in home assessment
<b>Available support and resources</b>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Call Community Paramedics Response Team Program</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Patients in and North of Red Deer:</b> Call 1-833-367-2788 for same day referrals</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Patients South of Red Deer:</b> Call 1-855-491-5868 for same day referrals</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Hours:</b> 6:00 am to 10:00 pm 7 days a week*</p> <p>*The referring physician must be able to consult with the community paramedic when they are with the patient for treatment orders as well as to ensure proper follow up</p> <p><b>About:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Program provides responsive urgent mobile healthcare by facilitating in community assessment, treatment and diagnostics in collaboration with the patient's care providers.</li> <li>• Response time is confirmed upon receipt of referral based upon patient acuity or when service is requested.</li> <li>• Upon receipt of referral a community paramedic will be dispatched to the patients dwelling where they will conduct a comprehensive assessment and develop a customized care plan after consultation with the patient's most responsible healthcare prescriber.</li> <li>• A detailed record of the patient encounter will be sent to the patients' healthcare team.</li> </ul> <p><b>Where:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Paramedic teams have locations in each zone, but the program is not available in all areas of the province.</li> <li>• Paramedic teams provide coverage within a 50km distance from their home location.</li> <li>• Locations are listed on the <a href="#">website</a> as well as in <a href="#">Alberta Referral Directory</a></li> </ul> <p><b>Referral Form:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access the referral form through <a href="#">Alberta Referral Directory</a> (search 'Mobile Integrated Healthcare') <b>OR</b> through the website (under "Forms &amp; Information") <a href="#">EMS Mobile Integrated Healthcare – Community Paramedicine   AHS</a></li> </ul>



<b>NON-URGENT daytime advice</b>	
The COVID-19 tele-advice services are currently supported by specialists from respiratory, general internal medicine and infectious disease	
<b>Clinical presentation</b>	You are unsure of the best course of management in a deteriorating patient who is clinically stable (see Emergent Management criteria)
<b>Available support and resources</b>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Contact local resources in your regional centres:</b></p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Contact ConnectMD Tele-advice (North, Edmonton &amp; Central Zones)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visit <a href="http://www.pcnconnectmd.com">www.pcnconnectmd.com</a> or call/text: 1-844-633-2263</li> <li>• Hours: Monday to Thursday, 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. and Fridays, 9a.m. to 4 p.m. (except statutory holidays)</li> <li>• *Summer hours: Monday 10a.m - 4p.m; Friday 9a.m - 2p.m; other days same as above</li> <li>• Providers can expect to receive a call-back within two to three hours</li> <li>• Adult and pediatric tele-advice lines</li> </ul> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Contact Specialist Link Tele-advice (Calgary &amp; South Zones)</b></p> <p>Visit <a href="http://www.specialistlink.ca">www.specialistlink.ca</a> or call: 1-844-962-5465</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hours: 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. from Monday to Friday (except statutory holidays)</li> <li>• Providers can expect to receive a call-back within one hour</li> </ul>

<b>NON-URGENT advice</b>	
<b>Clinical presentation</b>	You have non-urgent COVID-19- related questions and require electronic advice
<b>Available support and resources</b>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Alberta Netcare eReferral Advice</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use the eReferral Advice Request option for non-urgent questions requiring advice within 2-5 days.</li> <li>• Go to <a href="http://www.albertanetcare.ca/eReferral.htm">www.albertanetcare.ca/eReferral.htm</a> for instructions on how to submit an advice request.</li> </ul>

Tele-advice source: [COVID-19 tele advice for primary care | www.ahs.ca/assets/info/ppih/if-ppih-covid-19-primary-care-tele-advice.pdf](https://www.ahs.ca/assets/info/ppih/if-ppih-covid-19-primary-care-tele-advice.pdf)

### **For symptoms persisting longer than 14 days from onset**

Many patients experience ongoing symptoms past 14 days, such as residual cough or fatigue. If these patients have clearly improved, these residual symptoms can likely be managed with conservative care and reassurance.

The [Getting Healthy After COVID-19 | www.ahs.ca/topics/Page17397.aspx](https://www.ahs.ca/topics/Page17397.aspx) page offers many resources to support patients with self-management as well as options for getting medical support and answers to patient questions.



## BACKGROUND

### About this pathway

- The Primary Care COVID-19 Pathway was originally developed in 2020 as part of the Calgary Zone's Specialist Link initiative. Following the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic, a team that included specialists from Respiriology and Infectious Disease, AHS Primary Health Care, Primary Care Networks and members of the Calgary Zone Specialty Integration Task Group developed this pathway to help support family physicians to care for patients with COVID-19 in the community.
- Based on the successful adoption of the Primary Care COVID-19 Pathway within the Calgary Zone, and adapted versions of this pathway in other zones, in 2021 AHS Primary Health Care led an initiative to validate the applicability of the pathway for Alberta and to foster adoption of the pathway across the province, including adapting the pathway for use in primary care within the context of a post-pandemic environment.
- This pathway includes hyperlinks and is intended to be used as an electronic tool.

### Authors and conflict of interest declaration

- Names of participating reviewers and their conflict of interest declarations are available on request.

### Pathway review process, timelines

- This primary care pathway was created/updated with up to date knowledge at the time it was created/updated. It will be reviewed on a consistent basis as the knowledge and process base evolves. If you have concerns or feedback please email [AlbertaPathways@ahs.ca](mailto:AlbertaPathways@ahs.ca).

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## PROVIDER RESOURCES

<b>COVID-19 Resources</b>	
Therapeutic Management of Adult Patients with COVID-19	<a href="http://www.ahs.ca/assets/info/ppih/if-ppih-covid-19-therapeutic-management-summary.pdf">www.ahs.ca/assets/info/ppih/if-ppih-covid-19-therapeutic-management-summary.pdf</a>
Greenhalgh Trisha, Koh Gerald Choon Huat, Car Josip. Covid-19: a remote assessment in primary care <i>BMJ</i> 2020; 368:m1182	<a href="http://www.bmj.com/content/bmj/368/bmj.m1182.full.pdf">www.bmj.com/content/bmj/368/bmj.m1182.full.pdf</a>
Information for Primary Care Providers: novel coronavirus (COVID-19)	<a href="http://www.ahs.ca/topics/Page16956.aspx">www.ahs.ca/topics/Page16956.aspx</a>
Specialist Link COVID-19 Resources	<a href="http://www.specialistlink.ca/covid-19-resources">www.specialistlink.ca/covid-19-resources</a>
Scientific Advisory Group	<a href="http://www.ahs.ca/topics/Page17074.aspx">www.ahs.ca/topics/Page17074.aspx</a>
Long COVID-19 FAQ for Providers	<a href="http://www.ahs.ca/assets/info/ppih/if-ppih-covid-19-long-covid-provider-faq.pdf">www.ahs.ca/assets/info/ppih/if-ppih-covid-19-long-covid-provider-faq.pdf</a>
<b>Alberta Public Health Disease Management Guidelines</b>	
Alberta Public Health Disease Management Guidelines: coronavirus- COVID-19	<a href="https://open.alberta.ca/publications/coronavirus-covid-19">https://open.alberta.ca/publications/coronavirus-covid-19</a>
<b>Smoking, Vaping and COVID-19</b>	
Smoking cessation: healthcare provider	<a href="http://www.albertaquits.ca">COVID-19   Alberta Healthcare Providers (www.albertaquits.ca)</a>
<b>Post-COVID-19 Resources</b>	
Recovery & Rehabilitation After COVID-19: Resources for Health Professionals	<a href="http://www.ahs.ca/topics/Page17540.aspx">www.ahs.ca/topics/Page17540.aspx</a>
Rehabilitation and Allied Health Practice Considerations Post COVID-19	<a href="http://www.ahs.ca/assets/info/ppih/if-ppih-covid-19-rehab-allied-health-practice-considerations-post-covid.pdf">www.ahs.ca/assets/info/ppih/if-ppih-covid-19-rehab-allied-health-practice-considerations-post-covid.pdf</a>
<b>COVID-19 Vaccine Awareness Program (CVAP)</b>	
Physicians who have called patients via telephone or videoconference to address concerns related to COVID-19 Vaccine may claim HSC 03.01CC. Click on link for more information.	<a href="https://open.alberta.ca/publications/bulletin-alberta-health-care-insurance-plan-medical-services">Med 248 : COVID-19 Vaccine Awareness Program Update   https://open.alberta.ca/publications/bulletin-alberta-health-care-insurance-plan-medical-services</a>
<b>Advanced Care Planning</b>	
Advanced care planning	<a href="http://www.ahs.ca/info/Page9099.aspx">www.ahs.ca/info/Page9099.aspx</a>





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COVID-19 Websites & Self-Management Resources	
Navigating COVID: Symptom Tool	<a href="http://www.albertadoctors.org/COVID-19-info-resources/navigating-covid.pdf">www.albertadoctors.org/COVID-19-info-resources/navigating-covid.pdf</a>
COVID-19: Information for Albertans (AHS)	<a href="http://www.ahs.ca/topics/Page16944.aspx">www.ahs.ca/topics/Page16944.aspx</a>
COVID-19 info for Albertans (Government of Alberta)	<a href="http://www.alberta.ca/coronavirus-info-for-albertans.aspx">www.alberta.ca/coronavirus-info-for-albertans.aspx</a>
COVID-19: How to Manage Symptoms (MyHealth.Alberta.ca Network)	<a href="https://myhealth.alberta.ca/health/pages/conditions.aspx?Hwid=custom.ab_covid_19_symptom_mgmt_001">https://myhealth.alberta.ca/health/pages/conditions.aspx?Hwid=custom.ab_covid_19_symptom_mgmt_001</a>
COVID-19: Care Instructions (MyHealth.Alberta.ca Network)	<a href="https://myhealth.alberta.ca/health/pages/conditions.aspx?Hwid=custom.ack9673ahs">https://myhealth.alberta.ca/health/pages/conditions.aspx?Hwid=custom.ack9673ahs</a>
COVID-19: What you need to know (MyHealth.Alberta.ca Network)	<a href="https://myhealth.alberta.ca/Alberta/Pages/COVID-What-you-need-to-know.aspx">https://myhealth.alberta.ca/Alberta/Pages/COVID-What-you-need-to-know.aspx</a>
Outpatient treatment: Paxlovid™ FAQ for Patients	<a href="http://www.ahs.ca/assets/info/ppih/if-ppih-covid-19-paxlovid-faq-patient.pdf">www.ahs.ca/assets/info/ppih/if-ppih-covid-19-paxlovid-faq-patient.pdf</a>
COVID-19 Self-Care Guide	<a href="http://www.ahs.ca/covidselfcare">www.ahs.ca/covidselfcare</a>
After COVID-19: Information and resources to help you recover	<a href="https://myhealth.alberta.ca/HealthTopics/After-COVID">https://myhealth.alberta.ca/HealthTopics/After-COVID</a>
Post-COVID-19 Resources	
Alberta Healthy Living Program: COVID-19 videos for Albertans - <i>Helping You Feel Better After COVID-19</i>	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLi1tOF1I5ZoXjPI9QprdrLQRDP4JsEvOv">https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLi1tOF1I5ZoXjPI9QprdrLQRDP4JsEvOv</a>
Getting Healthy After COVID-19	<a href="http://www.ahs.ca/topics/Page17397.aspx">www.ahs.ca/topics/Page17397.aspx</a>
COVID-19 Translated Resources	
COVID-19: How to care for a COVID-19 Patient at Home (available in different languages)	<a href="http://www.ahs.ca/topics/Page17026.aspx">www.ahs.ca/topics/Page17026.aspx</a>
COVID-19 videos, webinars, podcasts available in multiple languages	Alberta International Medical Graduates Association: <a href="https://aimga.ca/healthhub/">https://aimga.ca/healthhub/</a>



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<b>Mental Health Resources</b>	
Mental Health resource page	<a href="http://www.ahs.ca/topics/Page17311.aspx">www.ahs.ca/topics/Page17311.aspx</a>
Mental Health Helpline	Phone 1-877-303-2642 for 24/7 assistance
Help in Tough Times – resource page	<a href="http://www.ahs.ca/amh/Page16759.aspx">www.ahs.ca/amh/Page16759.aspx</a>
Togetherall Clinically moderated free online peer-to- peer mental health community	<a href="https://togetherall.com/en-ca/">https://togetherall.com/en-ca/</a>
Text For Hope Free daily text messaging services	<a href="http://www.ahs.ca/topics/Page17019.aspx">www.ahs.ca/topics/Page17019.aspx</a>
<b>Smoking Cessation Resources</b>	
Smoking cessation	There is increasing evidence that smoking cessation may help to reduce the impact of COVID-19. <a href="http://www.albertaquits.ca/topics/smoking-vaping-covid-19">www.albertaquits.ca/topics/smoking-vaping-covid-19</a>
<b>Advanced Care Planning</b>	
Advanced Care Planning	Patients should also be counseled on advanced care planning, including: choosing an agent, communicating their values and documenting these in a Personal Directive. <a href="http://www.ConversationsMatter.ca">www.ConversationsMatter.ca</a>

