

COVID-19: BRI FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Updated: Feb 28, 2022

***** Please note that this FAQ will be updated regularly to reflect the hospital's latest guidance based on current public health measures *****

This resource has been created to answer frequently asked questions about COVID-19 as it relates specifically to the Bloorview Research Institute. If you have any additional questions, please speak to your lab manager or to Mani Kang, director of research operations, at mkang@hollandbloorview.ca. For hospital-related COVID19 updates, please refer to the staff COVID19 resources [web page](#) or the weekly all-staff COVID19 bulletin.

On Jan 31st, the province began to roll out its phased re-opening [plan](#) towards a gradual easing of public health restrictions. The hospital, however, is still maintaining its current level of IPAC measures in place to protect its clients and families as well as staff, students and volunteers.

With these changes, we encourage our staff to come and work onsite more regularly as part of our [third](#) phase of the recovery process. We do appreciate every situation is unique and will be at their manager's discretion.

Can I continue to work from home and come into the office occasionally? I'm concerned about unnecessary contact with people outside my bubble.

- Staff are encouraged to work on-site more regularly as per BRI's [third](#) phase of the recovery process.
- As always, our guidance regarding working arrangements will always be in alignment with the hospital-at-large and the Province's health authorities.
- We also appreciate every situation is unique; please speak to your manager to discuss your individual needs. See the hospital's [Working Remotely guideline](#) for more details.
- Additionally, the BRI's new space has been designed to be pandemic-ready so all surfaces can be disinfected easily and infection prevention protocols are in place to provide a safe environment for all BRI staff.

This is the first time that I've returned to work on-site more regularly at the BRI since the pandemic started in March 2020. Where can I find guidance for staff on COVID19 protocols?

- For staff returning to the BRI to work on-site more regularly for the first time March 2020, please read the recovery section on the COVID-19 resources of the staff [web page](#) or on [Freshdesk](#), BRI's [online resource portal](#), for the latest details on screening, masking and maintain social distancing measures.
- Staff can also send any general questions to covid19@hollandbloorview.ca
- Questions about workplace safety can be directed to your manager or to occupationalhealth@hollandbloorview.ca.

Research On-site

I'm a scientist/researcher/trainee. What is the procedure for onsite research visits for clients and their families?

- You'll need to register all onsite research participants by 11 p.m. the night of the appointment. Please keep in mind the list of research participants for a particular day is sent to the screening team automatically at 12:05 a.m. For example, if you have a client coming in for a research visit on Tuesday at 9 a.m., you need to register them by Monday at 11 p.m. The client's name will be on a list generated on Tuesday at 12:05 a.m. for the screening team.
 - Please review the [Guidelines for BRI Personnel Recovery: Phase 3](#) for more details (page 2)
- **Registering all participant visits is MANDATORY, and screening reserves the right to turn away your participant at the door at their own discretion.** This includes appointments at any time and day of the week including weekends. Please ensure you are doing your part to avoid any unnecessary burden for our participants and their families.
- You should also encourage families to complete an [online self-screening form](#) 24 hours before their on-site research appointment. Please note that at this time, only 2 caregivers can accompany a research participant. A caregiver can also bring their infant up to 30 months.
- Please remember to use the correct levels of PPE (i.e., level 3 mask + shield or goggles for all research visits).
- *Note to researchers who are partnering with U of T: U of T ~~will~~has implement a gradual restart to in-person participant research activities, ~~starting on which began~~ Feb. 7th.*

Are there any restrictions to in-person research activities at BRI?

- No, at this time, the BRI has not implemented any restrictions to in-person research activities. We, along with other TAHSN research institutes, are continuing to monitor the situation and are in regular communication with our peer hospitals and will communicate to scientists and researchers if anything changes.

What do I do if I can't maintain a two-metre distance from the research participant?

- You will be given a Level 3 hospital mask and face shield or goggles when interacting with clients.
- PPE reminders: eye protection should be worn by clinical and research staff when working within two metres of clients. This includes when speaking to a client, moving (i.e. pushing a wheelchair) or going for a walk with a client.

IPAC Guidance

In the past, the hospital has given staff who are non-client facing Level 1 masks. Has this changed given how transmissible the Omicron variant is?

- Yes, the hospital is now issuing Level 3 hospital-grade masks to everyone upon screening.

Where can I order more PPE?

- Please order PPE items e.g. goggles, shields via an email to #Stores at least 1-2 days in advance. Include the name and number of items required, as well as the account # to be charged. All orders placed must be picked up from Stores. For urgent requests, staff can come down with an account #.

What is the current guidance around holding meetings in-person at the research institute?

- Staff are able to have a maximum of 15 people based on room size and the ability to maintain a distance of 2 metres.
- Always wear appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE).

Do I need to wear a mask at all times in the office if my desk sits in an open office space?

- All staff who work in pods or stations where it is not possible to maintain six feet/two metres of physical distance from colleagues must wear masks at all times. Remember to also practice hand hygiene and avoid prolonged contact.

Am I permitted to eat at my desk and drink beverages?

- You can take sips of a beverage (water, coffee, tea for example) but please put your mask back on as soon as you're done. You should refrain from eating any meals or snacks at your work station.

Do we have good ventilation in the office? I'm concerned that we can't open any windows to bring in fresh air from the outside.

- Yes, the hospital has upgraded its ventilation and filtration systems by now supplying mostly fresh air (73%) into the BRI office along with some mixed air (23%). This air is then filtered twice through HEPA filters in all of our air-handling units.

What PPE rules should we be following when eating our meals in the kitchen?

- While in the kitchen, please follow these guidelines:
 - Please keep 6 feet/2 metres apart from others while eating with your masks off
 - Place your mask on a clean paper towel or in a clean container when not worn
 - Sit in designated spots when eating
 - Dispose of all garbage in the proper receptacles
 - Wipe up any spills after using the microwave
 - Sanitize your hands before and after you are finished eating
 - Do not leave food/drinks in the staff fridge for more than 2 days

COVID19-Related Funding

I'm interested in any research funding related to COVID-19. Can you help me find these grants?

- a. Here are links to COVID-19 related funding from the tri-councils:
 - i. [CIHR Updates](#)
 - ii. [NSERC Updates](#)
 - iii. [SSHRC \(including NFRF updates\)](#)
- b. Meghann Proulx, Manager, Grants, Contracts & Awards sends out a list of the latest COVID-related funding opportunities the first Tuesday of every month, including all new COVID-19 funding opportunities. If you have any questions, please email her at meghann.proulx@hollandbloorview.ca for more details.

Working Remotely

How can I get access to hospital systems to work from home?

- Hospital IS is providing remote access to Citrix or VPN for scientists and research staff to work remotely.
- VPN access to BRI Network: Users with BRI credentials have been notified about obtaining VPN access to the BRI network drives. If you have not received a notification, please [submit a BRI Network Request on Freshdesk](#) by email.
- Note: Those with Holland Bloorview laptops may be required to come on-site to install VPN. Those with personal devices only will be provided Citrix access remotely.

How can I hold meetings remotely?

- BRI has expanded its Zoom licenses to handle the increased demand. The recording option may be used. There is also a live transcription option now. If you are using Zoom for data collection, please inform your participants to only use their first name when joining the session.
- Contact Flora Wan at fwan@hollandbloorview.ca if you have any further Zoom-related questions.

If you have other questions/concerns, please contact Mani Kang, Director of Research Operations, at mkang@hollandbloorview.ca

For Holland Bloorview's latest updates on COVID-19, visit: www.hollandbloorview.ca