



## Guidelines for DOT While Practicing Physical Distancing & Enhanced Hygiene Practices

### Background:

COVID-19 transmission is a significant risk to all British Columbians and we have been directed by our Provincial Medical Health Officer and the Minister of Health to implement certain practices that can help minimize the spread of this virus from person to person. These practices currently include: washing your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or hand hygiene with alcohol-based hand sanitizer<sup>1</sup>; not touching your eyes, nose or mouth; covering your mouth and nose with a tissue or elbow when coughing or sneezing; staying home if you feel sick; and maintaining appropriate physical distance between yourself and others (2 metres/ 6 feet, or roughly 2 outstretched arms lengths).

The following guidelines for DOT are provided to minimize the risk for COVID-19 transmission and are for both your protection as well as your client's protection.

Please note that alternative means of providing DOT should be prioritized by the CHN, where possible:

- For low TB acuity clients (smear negative, no medication side effects, stable labs, continuation phase, no drug resistance, medium/low priority contacts) – Phone/video DOT is preferred. Home visits may be acceptable for in-person assessment, labs, and vision screening.
- For high TB acuity clients (smear positive, severely ill, medication side effects, abnormal labs, comorbidities, initial phase, drug resistance, homelessness, drug/alcohol abuse, high priority contacts) – Home visits are preferred when in-person assessment, labs, vision screening is needed. Phone/video DOT may be acceptable.

**Key Point:** Always follow infection prevention and control protocols, including diligent hand hygiene, throughout your client care. If you are sick with symptoms such as cough, fever, and/ or sore throat, please do not come to work. Inform your Community Health Nurse to ensure that medications will continue to be given to your clients.

### Preparation of Medications & Hand Hygiene

1. Wash your hands with soap and water for 20 seconds or more, as per current guidelines.
2. Don gloves to press medications out of blister packs and into medication cup (or into pill bottle, if transporting to client's home).
3. If transporting medications to client's home, place pill bottle in paper bag with gloved hands.
4. If you stop to do anything else prior to administering or delivering medications re-wash your hands.

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<sup>1</sup> Alcohol-Based hand sanitizers should have no less than 60 percent alcohol concentration



### Respiratory Precautions & Use of Personal Protective Equipment

1. Perform point of care risk assessment prior to visit to determine need for appropriate PPE:
  - Ask client by phone prior to visit, or at the door before entering the house, if anyone in the home (including the client) has a fever, cough or other upper respiratory symptoms.
2. If the answer is no, and client is not considered infectious for TB (i.e. smear or culture negative), masks are not required for you or your client as long as you are able to maintain appropriate physical distance. Use Option 1 or 2 for DOT below.
3. If the client is not considered infectious for TB (i.e. smear or culture negative) but they or someone in the household is having symptoms consistent with COVID-19, use Option 3: Medication administration outside the client's home. Report symptoms to CHN for further assessment.
4. If the client is infectious for TB or anyone else in the home is having new or worsening respiratory symptoms, use Option 3: Medication administration outside the client's home. Report symptoms to CHN.

### Options for DOT

#### 1) Medication administration in a Health Centre:

1. Ensure room has been cleaned and disinfected prior to use for medication administration.
2. Before client enters room, place medication and water at location where client will be seated.
3. Ask client to enter the room and be seated while maintaining appropriate distance between you and the client.
4. Enter the room and position yourself so you maintain the appropriate distance from the client while you observe them take their medications.
5. Ask the client how they are doing and if they have any concerns, as you normally would.
6. Keep length of visit to a minimum while recognizing that clients may be anxious about the COVID-19 virus.
7. Ask client to dispose of water cup and medication in the trash. If you must do this for the client, dispose of all items with gloved hands.
8. Ensure room is cleaned and disinfected after client encounter.



## 2) Medication administration in client's home:

1. If possible, call the client prior to starting this process and explain why you are doing things differently. Let them know that while you are in the house, you must maintain distance between you and them. This is to protect them as well as yourself.
2. Try to maintain a pre-arranged time schedule for medication delivery. If you are unable to bring the medication at the previously arranged time do your best to let them know.
3. Ask the client to have a glass of whatever liquid they use to take their medications poured and positioned where they will be taking their medication.
4. When you enter the home, ask the client to move to another location in the room or, if necessary, to another room in order to maintain the appropriate physical distance while placing the medication where they will be taking it.
5. If there are others present in the household ask them to also move to an appropriate distance while you are visiting.
6. Once you have placed the medication, move to a location at the appropriate distance and ask the client to come and take their medication.
7. While you observe the client take their medication ask them how they are feeling and if they having any concerns, as you would normally do.

## 3) Medication administration outside the client's home:

1. If you are unable to enter the client's home, call the client to explain why you are doing things differently. Let them know that you must maintain distance between you and them. This is to protect them as well as yourself.
2. Try to maintain a pre-arranged time schedule for medication delivery. If you are unable to bring the medication at the previously arranged time do your best to let them know.
3. Prepare the medications, as described under Preparation of Medications & Hand Hygiene.
4. Bring medications to client's door, set them down, and knock on door.
5. Move away from the door to appropriate physical distance and wait for client to open door.
6. Ask the client how they are doing and if they have any concerns, as you normally would.
7. Observe the client to take their medication.
8. Have the client dispose of the pill bottle and paper bag in their home trash.