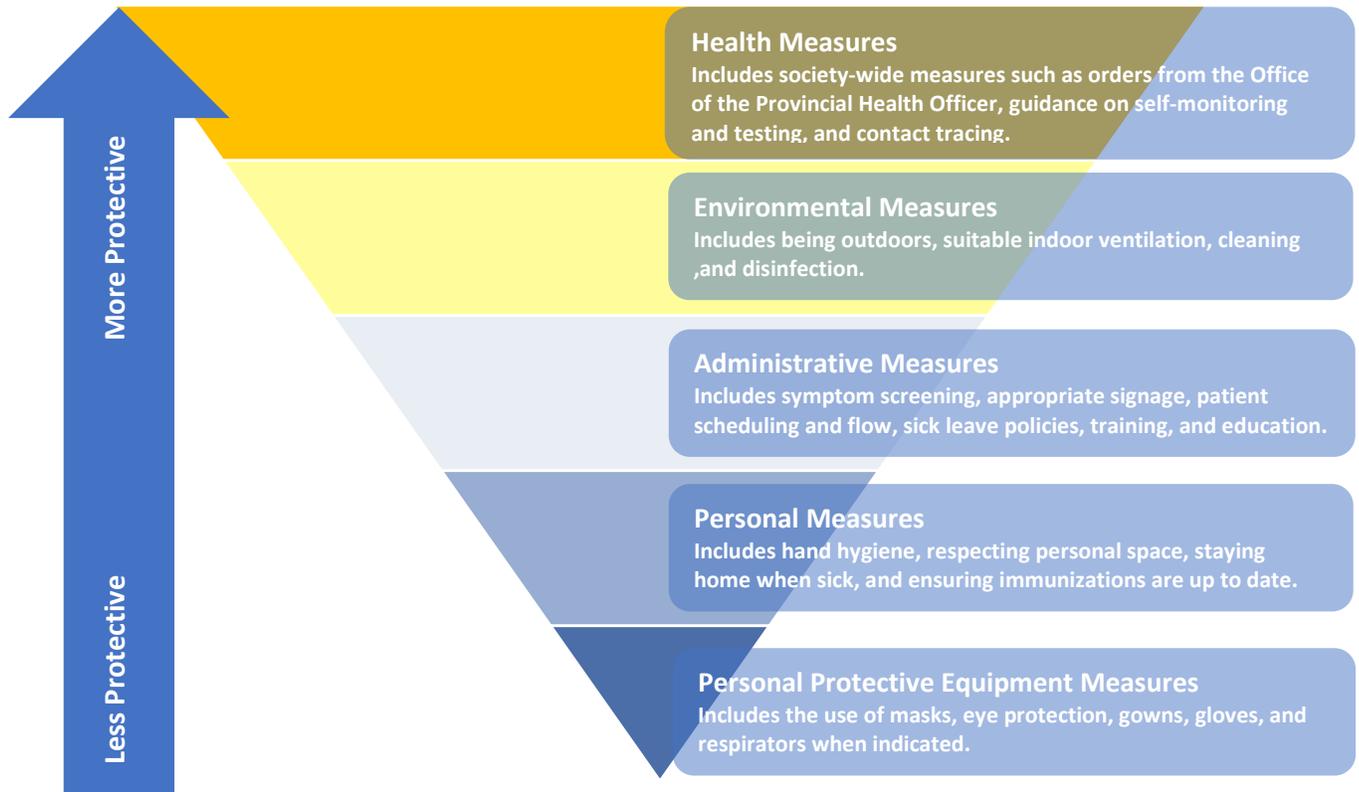




The Hierarchy for Infection Prevention and Exposure Control Measures for Communicable Diseases

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Infection Prevention and Exposure Control Measures

Implementing infection prevention and exposure control measures helps create a safe environment for clients/patients, residents, health-care providers, volunteers, visitors and the general public. The hierarchy of infection prevention and exposure control measures for communicable disease describes the measures that can be taken to reduce and eliminate the transmission of infectious diseases. Control measures listed at the top are more protective than those at the bottom. By implementing a combination of measures at each level, the risk of transmission is substantially reduced.



Health measures are society-wide actions to limit the spread of the infectious diseases and reduce severe complications, hospitalizations, and death from communicable disease such as COVID-19. Examples include: public health orders from B.C.'s Office of the Provincial Health Officer, guidance on self-monitoring and testing, case finding and contact tracing processes, and emphasizing the need for people to stay home when they are sick. Please see the [Office of the Provincial Health Officer's website](#) as well as the [BC Centre for Disease Control's website](#) for more information about current COVID-19 orders and notices.

Environmental measures are physical changes in a setting that reduce the risk of exposure. Examples include: making use of outdoor spaces, having suitable indoor ventilation and air exchange, routine cleaning, and disinfection of work as well as living spaces.

Administrative measures are policies, procedures, training, and care practices that prevent exposure to and/or transmission to others. Examples include: implementing facility or organizational infection prevention and control policies and procedures (e.g., screening for symptoms and risk factors, using appropriate signage, having a clear sick leave policy), providing regular training and education for health-care workers, isolation of people and their contacts who are infected, and limiting occupancy in an indoor location.

Personal measures are actions individuals can take to protect themselves and prevent spread to others. Examples include: washing hands frequently, respecting personal space in waiting areas and break rooms, coughing into one's elbow or tissue, staying home from work when sick, and ensuring immunizations are up-to-date.

Personal protective equipment (PPE) measures refer to the use of specialized equipment that is designed to minimize exposure to a variety of health hazards when worn appropriately. PPE is considered a less protective infection prevention and exposure control measure because although the use of PPE is the most visible in the hierarchy of controls, it is effective only when used in conjunction with all the other control measures. PPE must be suited to the task and must be worn and disposed of properly. Examples include: wearing a mask in certain settings, and in health-care settings, using medical masks, eye protection, gowns, gloves, and N95 respirators when indicated.

