

Preamble :

- This is updated guidance with emphasis on **optimal management of cases and close contacts to COVID-19 cases in acute care**. Changes in this guidance reflect aim of preventing nosocomial transmission.
- Previous guidance intended to provide options for adapting case and close contacts management in context of SARS-CoV-2 shifting toward endemic status and high pressure on healthcare systems and other essential functions of society.
- Preliminary data shows a vaccine effectiveness against Omicron infection up to 37 % (*Buchan et al, 2021*). Additionally, Omicron appears to have a shorter median incubation period of 3 days (range 0-8 days) (Brandal et al, 2021; Helmsdal et al, 2021; CDC, 2021; Lee et al, 2021). However, longer period of incubation of up to 32 days has been described in elderly population in the setting of previous variant of concern (Public Health Agency of Canada 2021)
- While immunocompromised/ clinically extremely vulnerable (CEV) patients are discussed in the below flowchart, a conservative approach with minimal risk tolerance should always be favored for this group - regardless of vaccination status and epidemiologic context. Please consult IPAC if needed for further guidance in this specific context.
- This guidance is based on the latest available scientific evidence about this emerging disease. Best practices, requirements and guidance may change in the future as new information becomes available.

Active COVID-19 case definition : individuals with laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 who are considered infectious. Please note that COVID-19 cases who have recently completed a 5-day isolation in community and are admitted in acute care setting (e.g. between day 5 and day 10 following onset of symptoms) will be considered active as there remains a residual risk of transmissibility. Please consult IPAC if further guidance is required to determine infectiousness.

Close contacts definition : patients in contact with a COVID-19 positive case during their infectious period in one of the following settings:
 (1) while they shared a room with a positive roommate; or
 (2) were identified as a household contact of a positive case within 10 days; or
 (3) they had prolonged contact within 2 m of a case for more than 15 minutes cumulatively in a day (including visitors and HCW) who did NOT have consistent or appropriate use of PPE; or
 (4) they were exposed to the infectious body fluids of a case; or
 (5) they were exposed to AGMPs in the same room of a confirmed case (as per definition provided within [BCCDC Interim Guidance : PH Management of Cases and Close Contacts](#))

