

What is being done to increase access for health care professionals— importation and locally sourced?

From Evergreen QAs

Q1. Is there a shortage of masks for private clinics or family doctors?

The safety of healthcare workers remains our top priority and the Government of Canada continues to work with provincial and territorial partners to prepare for and respond to the COVID-19 outbreak.

Orders for personal protective equipment and medical supplies were placed early on by federal, provincial and territorial governments to supplement their existing stocks.

Federal, provincial and territorial governments continue to work together to promote the appropriate use of personal protective equipment, assess potential shortfalls, identify priority items and collaborate on procurement.

Initial collaborative and bulk purchase orders are underway with a number of jurisdictions. We anticipate that this will be an ongoing process, with a variety of partners, as demand for and supply of products will change as the situation evolves.

Products are being sourced from a number of suppliers from a number of countries.

Will PHAC be pronouncing on the home-made version of masks and safety of use vs false protection?

• Home-made version of masks

From Evergreen QAs

- Health Canada will continue to use all tools at its disposal to expedite supply of safe and effective health products related to COVID-19. However, the department is not providing blanket approval of unauthorized drugs or devices. We will update Canadians with any new information as it arises.

From Canada.ca on Mask Use

• Safety of use vs false protection

- If you are a healthy individual, the use of a mask is not recommended for preventing the spread of COVID-19.
- Wearing a mask when you are not ill may give a false sense of security. There is a potential risk of infection with improper mask use and disposal. They also need to be changed frequently.
- However, your health care provider may recommend you wear a mask if you are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 while you are seeking or waiting for care. In this instance, masks are an appropriate part of infection prevention and control measures. The mask acts as a barrier and helps stop the tiny droplets from spreading when you cough or sneeze.

Recap what is being done to ensure future supply for health care professionals – updates since last week's announcement?

Update on PPE Supply

- As you know, there are global challenges right now in securing the supply of personal protective equipment (PPE). We are working closely with Public Services and Procurement Canada on the initial bulk order, and as mentioned above we tracking this very closely.
- The Logistical Advisory Committee (LAC), as part of the governance structure under the FPT Response Plan for Biological Events, is composed of members from all P/T jurisdictions, as well as ISC, HC, CSC and DND.
- LAC is working through PHAC and Public Service and Procurement Canada (PSPC) on its initial collaborative procurement process. The N95 respirator order was submitted to PSPC for processing on March 10th and the remainder of the order was initiated on March 11th.
- Six Provinces and Territories (ON, MB, NL, NU, NT, YT) made requests as part of the initial collaborative order.
- A wide range of items were included in this order, with the most significant being N95 masks, wipes, and swabs.
- The procurement process is well underway. Product orders are being placed in phases, depending on the product being purchased and confirmation of interest and availability from suppliers.
- Work is underway to determine timing for a second F/P/T procurement order.
- The National Microbiology Laboratory has secured an order of 800,000 (800 cases) of Universal Transport Medium (UTM) swabs. These are very similar to COPAN swabs. We expect to start to receive these next week, and will work through the Canadian Public Health Laboratories Network to distribute within Canada.

Is PHAC tracking the national supply or is this being managed one-on-one by P/Ts? What is the status of the national supply of PPE?

The Logistical Advisory Committee (LAC) is developing the picture of our national supply in conjunction with each PT.

From Evergreen QAs

Q2. What role do provinces and territories play in being alert to potential shortages in their jurisdictions?

Addressing the complex issue of drug shortages is a multi-stakeholder responsibility requiring collaborative action from provinces and territories, manufacturers, distributors, health care professionals, and the federal government. Health Canada works closely with the provinces and territories, who notify the Department of shortages of concern.

When a critical national shortage occurs, Health Canada works with stakeholders across the drug supply chain to coordinate information sharing and identify mitigation strategies. Factors such as whether the shortage is national in scope, whether alternative supplies are available, and whether the product is considered medically necessary are considered in determining the potential impact and any necessary actions by Health Canada. More information on the roles and responsibilities in addressing drug shortages can be found on our [website](#).