

**CIRCULAR**

**Date:** September 2, 2020

**CIRCULAR NUMBER:** COVID 19: 2020-124

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**To:** **Agencies receiving funding from the Healthy Baby Community Support Program**

**Subject:** **Reopening of in-person Healthy Baby programs**

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**Type:**  Policy  For Internal Reference Only  
 Procedure  Information Only

**Effective Date:** **September 7, 2020**

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**Introduction:**

The Healthy Baby Community Support Program is providing guidelines to support Healthy Baby (HB) funded agencies to plan the safe reopening of in-person indoor community sessions.

It is expected that agencies will continue to offer virtual group sessions and one-on-one distance programming support to families, while restarting in-person group programming.

**Please Note:** These recommendations are based on Manitoba's recommendations for restoring safe services. As the COVID-19 situation continues to evolve, this information is subject to change.

Our office will continue to provide updates as required. Please ensure that you follow current recommendations and best practices.

**Requirements:**

- HB agencies must follow provincial COVID-19 guidelines, public health guidelines and public health orders.  
<https://www.gov.mb.ca/covid19/>
- HB agencies will also be responsible to adhere to their own organizational/agency policies and procedures regarding COVID-19 and restoring services.

- HB agencies will be required to develop a reopening plan for in-person community sessions and to share these plans with HB consultants.

## **Safety Precautions for Healthy Baby Programs**

The sections below include more detailed information that explain health and safety precautions in the following areas:

- Participant Screening
- Physical Distancing
- Child-minding
- Cleaning and Sanitizing
- Food Preparation and Serving
- Masks

### **1. Participant Screening**

Agencies will advise participants that HB programs are voluntary.

**Self Screening:** All participants, visitors and HB team staff should use the self-screening tool before coming to a group, and should not attend if feeling unwell or if experiencing COVID-19 symptoms. No participant, team member or visitor should enter the HB group if they are sick, even if symptoms resemble a mild cold. This includes babies and other children.

Symptoms include:

- fever,
- cough,
- shortness of breath,
- sore throat,
- runny nose,
- nasal congestion,
- headache, or
- poor feeding and lethargy (for infants).

An up-to-date list of symptoms can be found at [www.gov.mb.ca/covid19/about/index.html](http://www.gov.mb.ca/covid19/about/index.html).

Participants, visitors or HB team staff should not join the HB group if they are a close contact of a confirmed case of COVID-19 or are awaiting a COVID-19 test result (excluding people tested as part of voluntary asymptomatic surveillance for COVID-19 that do not need to isolate).

**On-site Screening:** Everyone attending the group should be screened before entering the site.

The following are recommended screening questions:

- Have you or anyone else in your household traveled outside of Manitoba in the past 14 days, excluding travel to western Canada, the territories or Ontario west of Terrace Bay?
- Has anyone in your household in been in contact in the last 14 days with someone who is confirmed to have COVID-19?
- Do you have cold or flu-like symptoms, such as a cough, fever, runny nose, sore throat or headache? (e.g., fever higher than 38 degrees Celsius, new cough, runny nose, sore throat, shortness of breath/breathing difficulties)?

**Please Note:** A chronic stable cough, sneeze, runny nose, or nasal congestion that is unchanged and clearly linked to a known medical condition such as asthma or allergies is not an absolute requirement for exclusion. As well, children who are crying or teething can exhibit a runny nose.

Screening guidelines are based on advice from public health officials. Please ensure you are using the most current screening information, at:

<https://sharedhealthmb.ca/covid19/screening-tool/>

If an individual answers NO to all of the screening questions, allow entry. If an individual answers YES to any screening question, ask them to return to the group at another time.

If they are unsure whether to answer NO or YES to any question, err on the side of caution and ask them to return to the group at another time.

If individuals say they have symptoms, please refer them to Health Links-Info Santé at 204-788-8200 or toll-free at 1-888-315-9257.

**Site Screening Poster:** HB programs are required to post this COVID-19 screening poster at all entrances to the site: [www.gov.mb.ca/asset\\_library/en/coronavirus/COVID-19-poster-1.pdf](http://www.gov.mb.ca/asset_library/en/coronavirus/COVID-19-poster-1.pdf)

## 2. Physical Distancing

HB agencies are responsible for the following measures:

- Explain COVID-19 guidelines related to physical distancing to all attendees.
- Post external signs indicating COVID-19 physical distancing protocols and use floor markings, where possible, to guide where participants should sit or stand.
- Monitor entry into the group to ensure physical distancing and prevent congestion, while still allowing for individual screening.
- Individuals may use the same entrance or exit at the same time, as long as close interactions between individuals are brief (less than 10 minutes, ideally shorter).
- Determine the maximum number of individuals allowed within a facility based on occupancy limits, the size of the rooms and the ability to maintain physical distancing (two metres / six feet).

- Recognize that physical distancing for infants and young children can be challenging. Participants should be encouraged to attend with their baby but to make other child care arrangements for older children to reduce the number of children in child-minding.

**Please Note:** Public health orders around gathering size and distancing requirements are subject to change.

### **3. Child-minding**

The number of children who can receive child-minding is dependent on room size, number of child-minders and the maximum occupancy of the rooms to ensure physical distancing.

HB agencies should:

- encourage participants to register for child-minding to ensure adequate space;
- develop activities that are based on physical distancing;
- use space between chairs and tapelines to help support physical distancing in the child-minding room;
- practice frequent handwashing using soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- have child-minders help young children to ensure handwashing is done correctly;
- ask parents to supply their child's snack where possible; and
- not allow sharing of food or other personal items (i.e., hats, hair accessories).

### **4. Cleaning and Sanitizing**

HB agencies must ensure that adequate cleaning and sanitizing measures are in place for the site, including the group room and child-minding area, washrooms and kitchen.

Required cleaning and sanitizing measures include the following:

- Before and after each group, clean and disinfect all high-touch surfaces including countertops, tabletops, chairs (including below the front of the seat), shared equipment, light switches, electronics, washrooms, doorknobs and all furniture and other items that people may come in contact with.
- Ensure hand sanitizer is available at all entrances and exits.
- Remove common items that cannot be cleaned (e.g. handouts, magazines).
- If possible, increase ventilation by opening windows.
- Encourage parents to bring their own toys and ask them to ensure these toys are clean and only used by their child. Parents should only bring toys that can be easily cleaned. Plush toys should not be brought to the site.
- Discourage sharing toys and other personal items.

HB agencies must ensure that hand hygiene supplies are in-stock and available for use by participants, HB team staff and visitors at all times (i.e., soap, alcohol-based hand sanitizer and single-use towels).

## **5. Food Preparation and Serving**

Food safety guidelines for food preparation must be followed. At each session, one HB team member should serve food to participants on individual plates or offer snacks that are individually bagged. All participants must wash their hands, or use hand sanitizer where handwashing is not possible, before and after eating.

There should be no shared food containers for participants (e.g. shared pitchers of water, milk, salt and pepper shakers). Beverages must be served in individual containers and disposable containers are preferred.

Participants must not be involved in food preparation. However, a HB team member may do food demos so that participants can see the process.

Ensure that staff handling food wash their hands frequently. There should be no sharing of food between participants.

## **6. Masks**

All adults at the groups, including HB team members, participants and visitors, should wear non-medical masks at groups. Infants and children, including those in child-minding, are not required to wear a mask.

If you have any questions, please contact Shannon Dennehy at [Shannon.Dennehy@gov.mb.ca](mailto:Shannon.Dennehy@gov.mb.ca) or Tamara Hes at [Tamara.Hes@gov.mb.ca](mailto:Tamara.Hes@gov.mb.ca).