

Office Policy and Procedures for Infection Prevention and Control

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Introduction

The intent of this document is to provide direction and structure to the safe operation of our office and for chiropractic care to be delivered to all clients.

As regulated health professionals, we are required to review and follow directives and guidance from the Ministry of Health, Public Health Ontario, the Chief Medical Officer of Health and other authoritative bodies regarding practices during COVID-19.

We are committed to prioritizing the safety of our clients, staff, colleagues and others who visit our office. We have taken the time and carried out the due diligence to ensure that we are appropriately trained in proper practices related to client interactions, hygiene and cleaning and disinfection. This document is based on the directives and guidance provided by the College of Chiropractors of Ontario's [Guidance for Return to Practice for CCO Members when Authorized by Government](#).

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1. Initial Screening Procedures

All practitioners will carry out active and passive screening prior to any in-person interactions with clients. Initial screening will take place over the phone or through a secure teleportal (i.e. via an online screening questionnaire). Any additional in office screening will maintain physical distancing of at least 2 meters.

(a) Passive Screening

- Appropriate signage is mounted at points of entry of the office and at reception in a location that is visible before entering the office. (See [Appendix A – Office Entry Sign](#) and [Appendix B – Regular Screening Questions](#))
- Screening messages are communicated on office websites and voicemail. (See [Appendix C – Screening Messages](#))

(b) Active Screening

- Conducted over the phone or through teleportal before client interaction.
- Upon entry at office.

(c) Regular Screening Questions

All practitioners follow the client [screening guidance document](#) and the [COVID-19 Reference Document for Symptoms](#) from the Ontario Ministry of Health.

(d) Documentation of Screening

All practitioners will document the screening of clients as part of the record of personal health information as well as maintain documentation of screening of practitioners.

(e) Positive Screening Results

Please note: screening positive is not equivalent to a confirmed diagnosis of COVID-19.

A practitioner who forms the opinion that a person has or may have COVID-19 is required to report this to the medical officer of health of the health unit in which the professional services are provided, in accordance with section 25(1) of the *Health Protection and Promotion Act, 1990* and the College of Chiropractors of Ontario Standard of Practice S-0004: Reporting of Designated Diseases.

If a practitioner encounters a client who exhibits signs and symptoms consistent with the COVID-19, the practitioner must:

- Establish and maintain a safe distance or two metres;
- Have the client complete hand hygiene;
- Provide a new mask for the client to don;
- Separate the client from others in the clinic;
- Explain the concern to the client that they are symptomatic, discontinue treatment and reschedule the appointment;

- Advise the client to self-isolate for at least 14 days, complete the [online self-assessment](#) and contact their [local medical officer of health](#) or [Telehealth Ontario](#).
- Clean and disinfect the practice area immediately; and
- Keep a record of all close contacts of the symptomatic client and other visitors and staff in the clinic at the time of the visit. This information will be necessary for contact tracing if the client later tests positive for COVID-19.

Reservation Fees

Under normal circumstances our Office Appointment and Scheduling Policy will apply as usual. Clients are responsible to complete their own self-assessment prior to leaving for their appointment. If a client's self-assessment during the 24 hours prior to their appointment prevents them from attending our office as scheduled, we will waive the usual reservation fee. We will conduct active screening prior to all client interactions. If a client screens positive in our active screening process the usual reservation fee will apply.

Practitioners will not attempt a differential diagnosis of clients who present sign and symptoms of COVID-19.

If we become aware of a client who, after having been present in our office later tests positive for COVID-19, upon learning of this positive result we will contact our local public health unit for advice on our potential exposure and implications for continuation of work.

(f) Register for Contact Tracing

A register of all people entering our space is kept to help in contact tracing, if required. This would include people in the clinic aside from clients (e.g. guardians accompanying a client, couriers, other practitioners and their clients, etc.). The register includes every person's name and telephone number. This is not an open sign-in book and is managed privately by our staff. This registry will be kept until further notice. This information will be used for contact tracing only, should someone who visited the setting later be diagnosed with COVID-19.

2. Conducting In-Person Appointments

(a) Physical Distancing

Practitioners, staff, clients and other individuals should remain **two meters** away from each other within the office whenever possible, including in:

- waiting areas,
- transition areas and hallways,
- reception and payment areas, and
- clinical areas.

We have taken practical measures to ensure physical distancing, such as posting signage ([See Appendix D – Physical Distancing Sign](#)), reconfiguring our entrainment space and reception area, having clients wait outside until their appointment time, adjusting client schedules to reduce the number of people in our office, restricting access to practice environments to those who must be present (including clients,

client chaperones and staff) and consideration of off hour appointments for high-risk populations. Special considerations to accommodate appropriate physical distancing are in place because of our open concept entrainment space. There will be only one client or one family in the open concept rooms at any one time. (See [Appendix E – Regular Visit Infographic](#))

Contactless Payment & Email Receipts

Clients are encouraged to use credit card or debit cards for payment. We are limiting contact by allowing clients to scan/tap/swipe their own credits cards and minimize the exchange of paper whenever possible (e.g., use email receipts).

Removal and Restriction of Materials

We have removed or restricted access to any materials that cannot be properly cleaned and disinfected such as:

- Baskets (bring only your payment card);
- Blankets (wear enough layers);
- Cushions on chairs;
- Water cooler (remains in place but is unavailable for public use);
- Client journals;
- Promotional materials (ask if required);
- Jewelry for sale;
- Books (these will remain in place on the bookshelf, please do not touch);
- Kids toys, books and drawing materials.

(b) Hygiene

Hand hygiene is the most effective way of preventing the transmission of infections to clients and practitioners in our office. All practitioners are well educated in proper hand hygiene practices. Practitioners and clients should wash their hands with soap and water or hand sanitizer when appropriate, including:

- after arriving and entering the clinic
- before and after each client interaction
- before and after use of diagnostic or therapeutic equipment
- before and after changing a mask or other Personal Protective Equipment
- before and after processing any payments when contactless payment is not possible
- before and after leaving the clinic
- when hands are visibly soiled
- before and after cleaning/disinfection procedures

Practitioners and clients should avoid touching their faces and practice respiratory etiquette by coughing or sneezing into their elbow or covering coughs and sneezes with a facial tissue and disposing of the tissue immediately. When contact with the face or a tissue is made, hand hygiene must occur before resuming any activities in the clinic environment.

Please see the following resources for [hand washing directives](#) from Public Health Ontario.

(c) Use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Facemasks

Practitioners

Despite screening procedures, it is important to remember that individuals may carry COVID-19 and not demonstrate symptoms. Therefore, for proper contact/droplet precautions, practitioners will implement the use of appropriate PPE when in close contact with clients, especially during manual procedures, consistent with the protocols of the Ministry of Health and Public Health Ontario. This includes the use of a surgical/procedural mask (cloth masks are not appropriate for health care practitioners) when working with clients within a physical distance of two metres. Practitioners should avoid touching or adjusting masks while they are being worn. N95 respirators (required for Aerosol Generating Medical Procedures), eye protection and gowns are not required for chiropractic offices.

Clients

As part of the progressive opening plan, the Ontario Government has communicated that members of the public wear face coverings when going out in public and physical distancing of 2 metres cannot be maintained. Therefore, staff will remind clients to wear a face covering (cloth face coverings are acceptable) for appointments in the office while within 2 metres. If a client cannot wear a face covering (e.g. due to health condition or difficulty breathing), the practitioner will use their professional judgment to assess the risk of providing or denying assessment and/or care to the client.

Donning and doffing of masks

The following procedures should be followed for donning and doffing masks:

Donning mask:

1. Perform hand hygiene.
2. Put on mask. Secure ties to head or elastic loops behind ears. Mould the flexible band to the bridge of nose (if applicable). Ensure snug fit to face and below chin with no gaping or venting.

Doffing mask:

1. Perform hand hygiene.
2. Carefully remove mask by bending forward slightly, touching only the ties or elastic loops. Undo the bottom tie first and then undo the top tie. Discard the mask in the garbage.
3. Perform hand hygiene.

Practitioners and clients should be aware of and follow the proper donning, doffing and use of PPE, specifically masks. Practitioners should review and apply the resources from Public Health Ontario related to the use of masks. One mask may be used for multiple clients and an entire shift, but must be discarded and replaced when wet, damaged or soiled, exposed to bodily fluids, when taking a break and at the end of the day. The use of PPE must be precise and ordered to limit the spread of COVID-19.

Gloves

Single use gloves may be used but are not required for most chiropractic services.

Clothing

Practitioners practice in clean clothes that have not been worn in public places or with exposure to other individuals.

Please see the following resources for use of PPE from Public Health Ontario:

- [COVID-19 Operational Requirements: Health Sector Restart Document](#)
- [Public Health Ontario Resources](#)
- [Public Ontario Guide for PPE](#)
- [Public Ontario Guide for Universal Mask Use](#)
- [Public Services Health & Safety Association: Health and Safety Guidance During COVID-19 for Physician and Primary Care Provider Employers](#)

(d) Cleaning and Disinfection

Cleaning

Cleaning refers to the removal of visible soil. Cleaning does not kill germs but is highly effective at removing them from a surface.

Disinfection

Disinfecting refers to using a chemical to kill germs on a surface. Disinfecting is only effective after surfaces have been cleaned.

Cleaning and Disinfection Protocols

Methodology

Any areas or equipment that clients occupy should be regularly cleaned and disinfected, particularly high touch surfaces. Any materials on clinical contact surfaces that cannot be properly disinfected shall not be used.

We use a “wipe-twice” method to clean and disinfect. Initially, surfaces are wiped with a cleaning agent to clean off soil and wiped again with a separate cloth using disinfectant.

Cleaning and Disinfection Products

We use only cleaning and disinfecting products that are effective against COVID-19 and which have been approved for use in healthcare settings by Health Canada.

For Cleaning we use Solumel which is a natural cleaner/degreaser product made by Melaleuca.

For Disinfecting we use a Healthcare Hydrogen Peroxide Cleaner Disinfectant (Spray) [1.67% Hydrogen Peroxide Solution].

Frequency

Client appointments are scheduled to allow time for proper cleaning and disinfection in the office. The frequency of cleaning and disinfection is dependent on the nature of use/contact of the surface/item in question. Practitioners follow the cleaning and disinfection protocols from Public Health Ontario.

We have established a regular schedule for periodic environmental cleaning as outlined below.

The following is a list (not exhaustive) of areas that are addressed as part of the cleaning and disinfection protocols:

After each use:

- Chiropractic adjusting tables;
- Door handles;
- Chairs;
- Merchant terminal;
- Tablet touch screen;
- Reception transaction counter;
- Washroom taps and toilet;
- Pens and clipboards.

Twice per day:

- Computers, telephone and other devices in reception area;
- Entry, reception, waiting, transition areas such as hallways, doorways etc. as well as any furniture in those areas;
- Staff rooms and furniture in those areas;
- Other touch surfaces as identified in the clinic, such as light switches, doorknobs, taps, countertops, mobile devices, phones, clipboards, pens;
- Keyboards, mice (practitioners will perform Hand Hygiene prior to every use of these devices).

We maintain a log to document the regularly scheduled cleaning and disinfection procedures.

Please see Public Health Ontario's [Environmental Cleaning Factsheet](#) for further guidance on cleaning and disinfection.

Headrest Facecloths

- Headrest coverings that are used in the clinic, must be laundered in hot water (above 60 degrees Celsius). Staff that are handling these items should be gloved for both dirty and clean laundry processing. Staff must always use new gloves and wear a mask when handling clean laundry.

Guidance for Practitioners & Staff

Practitioners must self-screen for COVID-19 before attending in person at the clinic, using the same screening questions used for patients.

If a practitioner screens positive and/or exhibits any symptoms of COVID-19, they must stay home or be sent home and should follow the advice of public health officials before returning to work. When practitioners go home sick, their work areas must be cleaned and disinfected. Upon recommendation by public health officials, the practitioner may return to work at the clinic. The advice of Public Health officials shall be followed regarding impact on clinic operations during these periods.