



TRANSITIONAL COUNCIL FOR THE
— COLLEGE OF —
MASSAGE THERAPISTS
— OF ALBERTA —



Natural Health Practitioners of Canada
Praticiens de la Santé Naturelle du Canada

COVID-19 INFECTION PREVENTION AND CONTROL MANUAL FOR MASSAGE THERAPISTS IN ALBERTA

Effective January 4, 2021

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Introduction

On December 8, 2020, when the provincial government in the Province of Alberta initiated the second shutdown of Massage Therapy in Alberta, each Association had its own set of Guidelines surrounding the safe practice of massage therapy during the COVID-19 pandemic. While these guidelines were remarkably similar in content, the decision was made by the four Associations to create one standard that all four Associations would adhere to in the province. This set of guidelines, protocols, and best practices for the return to work has been established and agreed upon by the Canadian Massage and Manual Osteopathic Therapists Association (CMMOTA), the Certified Registered Massage Therapist Association (CRMTA), the Massage Therapist Association of Alberta (MTAA), and the Natural Health Practitioners of Canada Association (NHPC) and supported by the Transitional Council for the College of Massage Therapists of Alberta (TC-CMTA).

This document is to be used as the provincial standard for all Alberta members of the CMMOTA, CRMTA, MTAA and NHPC who practise massage therapy on Alberta in their return to work once allowed by the Government of Alberta following the second COVID 19 shutdown, and for the duration of the current pandemic. All Alberta CMMOTA, CRMTA, MTAA and NHPC members who practise Massage Therapy are required to follow the protocols laid out in Section 1 of this document until further notice. If the Province implements a requirement that is of a higher standard than is contained in this document, the provincial standard must be adhered to. Failure to adhere to it may result in disciplinary action by their respective association.

Section 2 of this document contains recommended Best Practices, which the four Associations fully support in the implementation of in massage therapy practices; however, at this time they are not mandatory requirements of government, and therefore have not been adopted as mandatory requirements by the four associations.

We do not anticipate that these guidelines, protocols, and best practices will be in place for all time, and we recognize that they may continue to evolve as the current pandemic situation evolves.

When changes to this document are made by the four Associations, each Association will forward those changes to all those who are members of their Association in Alberta.

These Guidelines and Protocols are in addition to, and not a replacement of each Association's respective Scope of Practice, Standards of Practice, or Code of Ethics, or other documents.

As the ban on Massage Therapy is lifted, all members are reminded that they do have the right to decide when to return to their practice. There is no need to rush. You have the right to wait until you feel safe, well equipped, confident, and ready to return to your practice.

As always, if you have questions or concerns, please contact the office of your Association for clarification.

SECTION 1 – MANDATORY REQUIREMENTS

All items in this section are mandatory for all Alberta Massage Therapists. They come out of government documentation that has been reviewed. In the case where Federal, Provincial, Territorial, or Municipal government requirements exceed the requirements in this section, the rules of Government must be followed, and supersede this directive.

INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT

- The mandatory requirements in this section stem from two documents which have been released by the Provincial Government of Alberta. For your reference they can be sourced at the following locations:
 - <https://www.alberta.ca/assets/documents/covid-19-relaunch-guidance-wellness-services.pdf>
 - <https://www.alberta.ca/assets/documents/covid-19-workplace-guidance-for-business-owners.pdf>

GENERAL WORKSPACE PROTOCOLS

- Many buildings that have been unoccupied for some time have had reduced or no water flow through the plumbing system during the pandemic, leading to the stagnation of water in the pipes. Prior to re-opening, each site needs to ensure fresh water replaces the stagnant water in the water lines. Please see Guidance for Flushing Water Systems at <https://www.alberta.ca/assets/documents/covid-19-relaunch-guidance-flushing-water-systems.pdf>
- Operators should take measures to prevent anyone experiencing COVID-19 symptoms from accessing the location. <https://www.alberta.ca/covid-19-testing-in-alberta.aspx>
- Operators should post signs that instruct those who may have been exposed to COVID-19 to not enter the premises. These can be sourced at <https://www.alberta.ca/covid-19-information-posters.aspx>
- Notify clients of the steps being taken to prevent the risk of transmission, and the importance of their roles in these measures:
 - COVID-19 signage should be posted in highly visible locations:
 - “Help prevent the spread” posters are available. These can be sourced at <https://www.alberta.ca/covid-19-information-posters.aspx>
 - When possible, provide necessary information in languages that are most relevant to the clientele.
- Clients and staff should maintain a distance of at least two metres, except when receiving service or for brief exchanges.
- It is strongly recommended that Hand Sanitizer Stations be placed by the entrance to the clinic, and locations where therapists, employees or clients are known to handle goods.

- Every effort should be made to encourage respiratory etiquette (e.g., coughing or sneezing into a bent elbow, promptly disposing of used tissues in a lined garbage bin) and must be followed by therapists, employees, and clientele.
- Consider placing additional garbage bins with removable linings at all entrances and exits. Garbage bins should be checked and emptied regularly.
- Remove all communal items that cannot be easily cleaned, such as newspapers, magazines, and toys.
- For businesses with a reception area, a physical barrier at the service counter between staff and clients is recommended.
- Obtain a sufficient supply of masks, gloves, hand sanitizer, hand soap, disinfectants, cleaning materials and sterilization equipment before re-opening.
- Where client service areas occur in shared spaces, tables and workstations should be separated by a minimum of two metres or through the use of physical barriers.
- Waiting area seating must be spaced so that clients are a minimum of two metres apart. Alternate solutions to waiting in the office should be considered, such as asking people to wait in vehicles and text messaging or calling when appointments are ready. Capacity in waiting rooms should follow current capacity limitations in place through the CMOH Health Orders - <https://www.alberta.ca/covid-19-orders-and-legislation.aspx#toc-1> and <https://www.alberta.ca/enhanced-public-health-measures.aspx>
- Staffrooms and break rooms should be arranged to follow physical distancing practices. Break times should be staggered to reduce employee gathering numbers. Capacity in break rooms should follow current capacity limitations in place through the CMOH Health Orders - <https://www.alberta.ca/covid-19-orders-and-legislation.aspx#toc-1> and <https://www.alberta.ca/enhanced-public-health-measures.aspx>

INFECTION AND PREVENTION CONTROL PROTOCOLS

- Provide hand sanitizer with a minimum of 60% alcohol content for client and worker use at points of entry and exit.
- Avoid sharing products or tools between workstations. If sharing is required, clean and disinfect products and tools between users.
- Items which cannot be laundered or cleaned and disinfected after each service are to be disposed of immediately after each service.
- Remove any non-essential decorations from the work areas.
- Therapists must wash or sanitize hands before starting work, before and after each client service, and after any other activity.
 - Where massage occurs using oils or creams, hands should be washed with soap and water in a sink. Hand sanitizer is not effective on soiled hands.
- ***All Hand Sanitizers must be approved by Health Canada (DIN or NPN number) and must contain a 60-80% Alcohol base***

PPE REQUIREMENTS FOR THERAPISTS

PPE is necessary when physical distancing of two metres or physical barriers cannot be maintained by administrative or engineered controls. PPE controls the hazard at the worker and client level.

- It is expected that **both the client and the worker wear masks** (non-medical masks at a minimum for the client, workers must wear procedural/surgical mask, ASTM Level 1 or higher).
- Therapists must wear masks (procedural/surgical ASTM Level 1 or higher) while working directly with clients, and anywhere physical distancing cannot be maintained.
- Masks must be changed when they are soiled (wet, dirty, damaged, or exposed to potential contaminants)
- Once a mask is removed, it must be replaced with a new mask.
- We recommend that masks be changed between clients.
- Masks and other disposable PPE must be discarded into a touchless plastic-lined garbage container.
- PPE, such as eye protection, may be reused by the same user, only if the manufacturer allows it and has provided clear cleaning and disinfecting instructions.
 - Assign a user's name and store separately from other PPE, after cleaning and disinfecting.
- Clean clothes must be worn by the practitioner and staff each day. If the practitioner and staff drive directly from their home to the clinic/place of work, no change of clothes is required. However, if they stop at other locations on their way to the place of work, then donning new clean clothes in the clinic is required.
- Clothes, including footwear, worn in the clinic must not be worn in public afterwards. Practitioners and staff must change into different clothes at the end of their shift.
- To clean clothes worn in the clinic, wash clothing in hot water (above 60°C) with regular laundry soap.
- Services that occur in or around the client's mouth, nose, and eyes are strongly discouraged at this time as the virus is found in the saliva, and mucosa. These services include inter-oral TMJ treatments.
 - If performing these activities, workers must wear, at a minimum, gloves, eye protection, masks, and disposable aprons if not already standard operating procedure. Workers must also be protected while cleaning and disinfecting any reusable equipment used in providing this type of service.
 - Client's masks may be removed while providing inter-oral treatment but must be reapplied immediately after inter-oral treatment has been completed.

PPE REQUIREMENTS FOR CLIENTELE

- It is expected that **both the client and the worker wear masks** (non-medical masks at a minimum for the client, workers must wear procedural/surgical mask, ASTM Level 1 or higher).

- If a client has difficulty breathing while face down during treatment their mask may be removed. Once the massage is complete, or once the client moves to a face-up position, the client should perform hand hygiene and put on a mask. This must be documented in the therapist's treatment notes.
 - If a mask is removed during treatment, and no additional barrier is in place (e.g. pillow case over the head rest - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=amsu0JMiMmE&feature=youtu.be>) then it is **recommended** that the droplet zone area on the floor, stool, or arm cradle be cleaned and disinfected between clients.

PPE REQUIREMENTS FOR SUPPORT STAFF

PPE is necessary when physical distancing of two metres or physical barriers cannot be maintained by administrative or engineered controls. PPE controls the hazard at the worker and client level.

- Any staff who do not work in client care areas or have direct client contact are required to wear a mask (procedural/surgical ASTM Level 1 or higher) at all times in the workplace if a physical barrier (e.g., plexiglass) is not in place or if physical distancing cannot be maintained.

PPE PROTOCOLS FOR DONNING PPE

The following is a step-by-step process for putting on PPE

- Step 1: Wash or Sanitize Hands
- Step 2: Put on Gown or Apron (if worn)
- Step 3: Put on Mask
- Step 4: Put on Protective Eyewear
- Step 5: Wash or Sanitize Hands

Steps can be viewed at <https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/info/page6422.aspx>

PPE PROTOCOLS FOR DOFFING PPE

The following is a step-by-step process for the removal of PPE

- Step 1: Wash or Sanitize Hands
- Step 2: Remove Gown (if worn)
- Step 3: Wash or Sanitize Hands
- Step 4: Remove Protective Eyewear
- Step 5: Remove Mask
- Step 6: Wash or Sanitize Hands

Steps can be viewed at <https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/info/page6422.aspx>

HAND HYGIENE PROTOCOLS FOR THERAPISTS/EMPLOYEES

Proper hand hygiene is the most effective way to stop the spread of COVID-19 and other infections. Practice it often.

- Proper hand hygiene, including washing with soap and water for 20 seconds, or the use of 60-80% alcohol-based hand sanitizers approved by Health Canada, when hands are not visibly soiled.
- Hand washing with soap and water is required if the therapist or employee has visibly dirty hands.
- Glove use alone is not a substitute for hand hygiene. Hands should be cleaned before and after using gloves.

HAND HYGIENE PROTOCOLS FOR CLIENTELE

- Proper hand hygiene, including washing with soap and water for 20 seconds, or the use of 60-80% alcohol-based hand sanitizers approved by Health Canada, when hands are not visibly soiled.

GUIDELINES FOR BOOKING APPOINTMENTS AND PRE-SCREENING OF CLIENTELE

One of the greatest ways to prevent the spread of disease to yourself and to your clientele, is to prevent the presence of the disease from entering your workspace. This is why the following protocols are so important.

- Businesses are advised to have their clients book appointments online or by phone. Walk-in service is not allowed, all clients must be seen by appointment only.
- When taking the initial appointment booking call, it is important to ask the following questions before booking an appointment:
 - Are you experiencing any of the following symptoms, even mildly?
 - Fever
 - Cough
 - Shortness of breath
 - Difficulty breathing
 - Loss of sense of taste or smell
 - Have you had unprotected close contact with anyone who has been diagnosed with COVID 19?
 - Have you travelled outside of Canada in the last 14 days?
 - Have you been in contact with anyone who has travelled outside of Canada in the last 14 days?
- If the person booking the appointment answers yes to any of these questions, then you should politely request that they contact 811 and follow AHS recommendations and wait

until they can answer no to all of the questions before calling you to book an appointment.

- When booking appointments with a client, the client should be reminded that if they become sick, feel in any way unwell, are running a fever, or are placed on self-isolation, that they must reschedule their appointment.
- 24 Hour Cancellation Requirements and subsequent fees should be temporarily suspended, however no-show fees may remain in place.
- Clients should be screened by telephone before an appointment is booked and are not given an appointment if they have COVID-19 symptoms.
- People identified as symptomatic should be instructed to seek medical attention by dialing 811.
- All clients should be encouraged to complete the COVID-19 self screening tool provided by their provincial health authority in the 24 hours leading up to their appointment. Here is the link: <https://ca.thrive.health/covid19/en>
- Clients should be told to arrive no earlier than 5 minutes before the start of their appointment. Clients must attend appointments alone, unless the client is a minor, in which case a parent or guardian may also attend.
- Inform Clients that they must wear masks for their appointments
 - Ask clients to bring their own mask and have a supply of masks on hand.
 - Mask changes may be necessary during services that are longer in duration. Masks should be changed if they become damp.
- Consider adjusting or waiving cancellation fees for clients who cancel due to quarantine, isolation, or illness.
- Client appointments must be staggered, so that there is a minimum of a five-minute time difference between the arrival times of clients.
- Ask clients not to arrive more than five minutes before their appointment, in order to prevent gathering.
- Consider creation of dedicated time slots or full days for appointments for higher-risk clients.
- Space appointment times to ensure workstations and service areas can be properly cleaned and disinfected.
- Ask clients to attend appointments, unaccompanied, unless accompaniment is necessary (e.g., a parent or guardian may be necessary where services are provided to minors or elderly).

APPOINTMENT PROTOCOLS

Initial Interaction

- Clients must be informed to maintain a distance of at least two metres, except when receiving service or for brief exchanges.
- All clients should be encouraged to use hand sanitizer stations upon entering the clinic space.

Screening of Clientele

- All clients, and anyone attending the clinic with the client, must be screened for any signs of illness or symptoms of COVID 19. The following screening questions must be asked before proceeding with treatment:
 - Are you experiencing any of the following symptoms, even mildly?
 - Fever
 - Cough
 - Shortness of breath
 - Difficulty breathing
 - Loss of sense of taste or smell
 - Have you had unprotected close contact with anyone who has been diagnosed with COVID 19?
 - Have you travelled outside of Canada in the last 14 days?
 - Have you been in contact with anyone who has travelled outside of Canada in the last 14 days?
- Signs of sickness, including a fever, cough, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, sore throat, runny nose or nasal congestion are an absolute contraindication for massage treatment, and in such cases, treatment must be cancelled or rescheduled. **Answers to the screening questions are to be recorded in the treatment notes.** No services should be performed on ill or symptomatic clients.
- The pilot project for rapid testing at the Calgary Airport and the Alberta/US Border, while allowing an individual to continue to operate without having to self isolate for 14 days upon return to Canada from abroad, in the best interests of the public, and Massage Therapists and other clinical staff, treatment of individuals who have travelled outside of Canada are contraindicated for treatment for 14 days.
- If a client is a close contact of someone who has a travel exemption, or a client who has a travel exemption, they are able to receive treatment, at the discretion of the therapist.

Treatment

- During the treatment, the therapist and the client must wear the appropriate PPE.

Payment and Provision of Receipt and Other Documents

- During transactions, if possible, limit the exchange of papers such as receipts. If documents must be exchanged, leave them on a clean surface while maintaining a two-metre distance.
- Where possible, payments should be accepted through contactless methods (e.g. Tap or eTransfer). In order to limit contact, allow customers to scan/tap/swipe their own cards.
- If you handle cash or credit cards or credit card machines you should practice proper hand hygiene. When hands are not visibly soiled and between customer interactions, alcohol-based hand sanitizers approved by Health Canada can be used.

PROTOCOLS FOR SCREENING OF THERAPIST AND/OR EMPLOYEES

- All therapists and/or employees must be screened or self screen for any signs of illness or symptoms of COVID 19 before the start of their shift. Signs of sickness, including a fever, cough, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, sore throat, runny nose or nasal

congestion mean that the therapist or employee must not attend the workplace. No services should be performed by ill or symptomatic therapists.

- Employers are encouraged to examine sick leave policies to ensure they align with public health guidance. There should be no disincentive for workers to stay home while sick or isolating.
- Changes to the Employment Standards Code will allow full and part-time employees to take 14 days of job-protected sick leave if they are:
 - Required to isolate; and/or
 - Caring for a child or a dependent adult who is required to isolate.
- Employees are not required to have a medical note.
- Therapists or support staff who have travelled internationally in the past 14 days, or who have been in close contact with a known case of COVID-19 in the past 14 days should not attend the workplace.

PROTOCOLS FOR A SICK THERAPIST OR EMPLOYEE

- If a therapist or employee of a clinic is symptomatic, they must contact 811 and follow their directions.
- CMOH Order 05-2020 legally obligates individuals who have a cough, fever, shortness of breath, runny nose, or sore throat (that is not related to a pre-existing illness or health condition) to be in isolation for 10 days from the start of symptoms, or until symptoms resolve, whichever takes longer. If the person has been tested, and the test has come back negative, they only need to isolate until symptoms have resolved.
- If a therapist or an employee attends the clinic while showing symptoms consistent with those of COVID 19 the following requirements apply:
 - Therapists or employees who appear to have acute respiratory illness symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath) upon arrival to the workplace, or become sick while at the workplace, should begin isolation at home immediately.
 - After being directed to leave the business, symptomatic employees should follow hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette and maintain at least 2 meters of distance from other therapists or employees or clients.
 - If the individual does not have their own transportation, business owners/management should support them in arranging for transportation home where needed:
 - Symptomatic/sick individuals are not allowed to take public transportation under CMOH Order 05-2020
 - Once a sick individual has left the workplace, clean and disinfect all surfaces and areas with which they may have come into contact.
 - The employer should immediately consider and record the names of all close contacts the sick worker may have been in contact with that day and in the 48 hours prior to when the symptoms started. This information may be necessary if the sick worker later tests positive for COVID-19.
- If a therapist or employee is confirmed to have COVID-19, and it is determined that other people may have been exposed to that person, Alberta Health Services (AHS) may be in contact with the business to provide the necessary public health guidance. Records may be sought up to four-weeks prior to the individual becoming ill.

ENVIRONMENTAL CLEANING AND DISINFECTION PROTOCOLS

Because the COVID-19 virus can survive for several days on different surfaces and objects frequent cleaning and disinfection is important to prevent the spread of the disease. There is a difference between cleaning and disinfection. Cleaning has to do with the removal of dirt, dust, and oils. Disinfection has to do with the destruction of germs. Cleaning is required prior to disinfection to remove dirt, dust, and oils to ensure the effectiveness of disinfection.

- Cleaning refers to the removal of visible soil. Cleaning does not kill germs but is highly effective at removing them from a surface. Disinfecting refers to using a chemical to kill germs on a surface. Disinfecting is only effective after surfaces have been cleaned.
 - Use a “wipe-twice” method to clean and disinfect. Wipe surfaces with a cleaning agent to clean off soil and wipe again with a disinfectant.
- All businesses must use a disinfectant listed on the Government of Canada “Approved Disinfectant Agents List for COVID 19” - <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/drugs-health-products/disinfectants/covid-19/list.html>. ***The disinfectant product manufacturer’s instructions must be followed for use, safety, contact time, storage and shelf life.*** *Vinegar, Tea tree oil solutions, Thieves’ oil and similar solutions are **NOT** proven to be effective disinfectants and cannot be used in place of Health Canada approved disinfectants. It is a requirement that only approved disinfectants with a viricidal claim are used to limit the spread of COVID-19.*
- Apply the disinfectant following the instructions on the label. If using a cloth, it must be clean at the beginning of the disinfection process, and must either be disposed of, or laundered following use.
- Develop and implement procedures for increasing the frequency of cleaning and disinfecting of high traffic areas, common areas, public washrooms, and showering facilities.
- Frequently clean and disinfect high touch/shared surfaces such as:
 - Doorknobs, light switches, toilet handles, faucets and taps, elevator buttons, railings
 - Phones, computers, remote controls, keyboards, desktops, conference room equipment, cash registers, surface counters, customer service counters, menus
 - Equipment handles, hand tools, pens, machinery control panels, seat belt buckles, joysticks, steering wheels, and controls on powered mobile equipment.
- Frequently clean and disinfect high traffic/communal areas such as staffrooms, kitchen, and washrooms.
- Equipment must either be cleaned and disinfected, or disposed of, after each client service.

WORKPLACE BATHROOM AND SHOWER CLEANING AND DISINFECTION PROTOCOLS

- Maintain bathrooms and showers and any associated amenities in a clean and sanitary condition. The frequency of cleaning and disinfection will vary depending on usage.
 - Use a “wipe-twice” method to clean and disinfect high touch shower surfaces such as faucets, door handles, soap and shampoo dispensers and towel bars. Wipe these kinds of surfaces with a cleaning agent to clean off soil and wipe again with a disinfectant.
- Consider physical distancing of users in order to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Distancing can be facilitated by the use of partitioned stalls, decommissioning toilets or urinals that are less than 2 meters apart or staggering entry into locker rooms and showers so that fewer users are present at a time.
- Post signage in bathrooms and shower areas that informs users of how to mitigate risks of COVID-19 transmission (e.g., hand hygiene, respiratory etiquette).
- Where necessary, maintain an adequate supply of soap, paper towel, toilet paper, hand sanitizer and other supplies.

LINEN AND LAUNDRY PROTOCOLS

- Towels, sheets, blankets, and any other linens which have been used or exposed to the client in the treatment room, including any cloth PPE must be laundered after each service.
- Clothing and fabric items should be laundered and dried on the highest temperature setting possible. Ensure that all items are thoroughly dried.

OTHER GENERAL BUSINESS PROTOCOLS

- A registry of all people entering the clinic should be kept for contact tracing. This would include people in the clinic aside from clients (e.g., couriers, guardians accompanying a client, etc.). This is not an open sign-in book and should be kept and managed privately by the clinic. This registry must be kept while this directive remains in place.
- Avoid providing samples and testers and ask customers to avoid unnecessarily handling of retail products. If you provide significant retail offerings see the Guidance for Retail Business document at <https://open.alberta.ca/dataset/3324f808-a6ae-4aad-9fd1-4af0735dee2c/resource/36c8cf24-271d-4e18-813e-c727effeb47c/download/covid-19-relaunch-guidance-retail.pdf>

MOBILE MASSAGE THERAPY

- Massage therapists who are providing mobile massage therapy sessions must ensure they follow the same pandemic practice guidelines as previously stated. In addition to adhering to all the previously outlined practice measures, a mobile massage therapist must:
 - Maintain social distancing as much as possible

- Ensure COVID-19 screening on all people in the treatment area
- Record a log of all people encountered during treatment session
- Ensure all hand hygiene and sanitization procedures are followed
- Always wear a procedural/surgical mask, ASTM Level 1 or higher when providing care or when 2m distance from person(s) cannot be maintained.
- After treatment, remove all linens and supplies. Stow linens and supplies in a sealed bag and place in the trunk of the Massage Therapist's vehicle, separate from anything else, until proper sanitization can be completed.
- Sanitize all doorknobs, handles, and surfaces in the treatment area.

SECTION 2 – RECOMMENDED BEST PRACTICES

All items in this section are recommended best practices. They are not mandatory; however, they are in the best interest of the therapist, the client, and society as a whole.

GENERAL WORKSPACE PROTOCOLS

- Businesses should post external signs indicating COVID-19 physical distancing protocols, along with floor markings where service is provided or lines form.
- Businesses should maintain a single point of entry.
- Besides clients, businesses should limit business-related visitors to essential services only. This may include tradespeople, pest control or compliance officers.
- All communal items, such as water coolers, candy, magazines, complementary phone chargers, etc. should be removed from the workspace.
- The entire workspace should be kept free from clutter.
- Play areas within waiting areas should be closed.
- Beverages (coffee, tea, water, etc.) should not be offered at this time. If necessary, water may be supplied in bottled form for the client to take with them and consume outside of the clinic space.
- In businesses where meals are provided to employees, meal service in common eating areas should occur in rotations to minimize the number of people in the room. Physical distancing of two metres should be practiced at all times. Food services staff should serve all food, and common touch items should be removed.
- Retail space should be modified to implement physical distancing requirements. Where possible, discourage browsing of retail products and support online or telephone purchases with in-clinic pick-up and enforce strict no return policies. All samples or testers should be removed.

INFECTION AND PREVENTION CONTROL

PROTOCOLS

- Avoid sharing pens and office equipment. They should be disinfected after every use.
- Employees who handle cash or credit cards or credit card machines should practice proper hand hygiene. When hands are not visibly soiled and between customer interactions, alcohol-based hand sanitizers approved by Health Canada can be used.
- Employees should wash their hands with soap and water when hands are visibly soiled, before and after any breaks, and at the beginning and end of their shift.
- Staff should be assigned to dedicated work areas as much as possible. They should be discouraged from sharing phones, desks, offices, and other tools and/or equipment.
- Staff and clients should be given clear information about 2 metre physical distancing.
- Workplaces should provide employees with resources such as tissues, no-touch receptacles (means a garbage container that either has a lid which is opened by motion or has a lid which is opened by depression of a foot pedal, or which has no lid), hand soap, alcohol-based hand sanitizers, disinfectants, and disposable towels to promote a safe and hygienic work environment.
- Linens (including sheets, blankets, heating pad covers, etc.) should be stored either in closed containers or in cabinets. They should not be stored on an open shelf where accidental contamination may more easily occur.
- All Linens used or exposed in a treatment area when a client is present, should be laundered before they can be used again.
- Laundry baskets, if made from a cloth material should be laundered between uses. Laundry baskets made from a plastic or wipeable, non-linen material, should be cleaned and disinfected between uses.
- All tools used or exposed in a treatment area when a client is present should be cleaned and disinfected before they are used again.
- Treatment tables or treatment chair surfaces with tears should be immediately repaired and then replaced as soon as reasonably possible.
 - At no time should a client be treated on a table with exposed foam.
 - Duct tape is acceptable for emergency repair use only. It is expected that the arrangement for suitable long-term repair or replacement should be initiated within two business days of the discovery of a tear.
- Cloth upholstery on furniture and treatment tables that can be properly disinfected may continue to be used.
 - If the cloth upholstery cannot be properly disinfected, it should be removed from the clinic environment.
- All PPE used or exposed in a treatment area when a client is present, should be cleaned and disinfected, or laundered, before they can be used again, with the exception of the mask.
- Masks should be changed when they become moist, damaged, or dirty.

PPE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THERAPISTS

PPE is necessary when physical distancing of two metres or physical barriers cannot be maintained by administrative or engineered controls. PPE controls the hazard at the worker and client level.

- Masks, Aprons and Facial or Protective Eyewear may be worn by the therapist during the entire interaction time with a client.
- If used, Aprons can be made of either cloth or plastic; cloth aprons should be changed between clients and laundered, while plastic aprons should be cleaned and disinfected between clients.
- If used, Protective eyewear should be cleaned and disinfected between clients.
- Prescription eyewear alone do not provide sufficient protection from COVID-19

HAND HYGIENE PROTOCOLS FOR THERAPISTS

Proper hand hygiene is the most effective way to stop the spread of COVID-19 and other infections. Practice it often.

- Handwashing protocols are as follows:
 - Wash hands for at least 20 seconds using an adequate amount of soap.
 - Rub hands together to create friction, rinse under running water, and dry them with single use towels.
 - Turn off the tap with single use towel.
- Proper hand hygiene should be performed:
 - Upon entering and exiting the practice environment
 - Before and after putting on PPE.
 - Before and after the removal of PPE.
 - Before and after physical contact with a client.
 - After handling dirty laundry
 - After cleaning client contact surfaces
 - Upon completion of any touch-based administrative tasks (e.g., payment transactions, entrance of data on a computer or tablet or mobile device)
 - Anytime the hands become soiled or dirty.

HAND HYGIENE PROTOCOLS FOR CLIENTELE

- Clients should be asked to use hand hygiene when:
 - Entering the clinic space
 - After putting on the supplied mask if they arrive not wearing a surgical or protective mask.
 - When entering the treatment space, if the client does not proceed directly to a treatment room upon entering the clinic
 - After treatment, before leaving the treatment space.
 - Before Processing Payment, if using a pin-pad device.

- Immediately before leaving the clinic space.

PRE-APPOINTMENT TASK GUIDELINES

- If the client has booked an appointment with you for the first time, provide the client with the necessary intake form, have them complete it and forward it to you via email before their attendance at their appointment. This should be done prior to attendance at the appointment.
- If there is paperwork that a client needs to provide in order to allow for direct billing to their health care insurance plan, it should be completed by the client and forwarded to you via email before attendance at the appointment.

APPOINTMENT PROTOCOLS

Initial Interaction

- Hands should be sanitized before putting on a mask.
- All clients should put on a mask as they enter the clinic space. The mask is to remain on the client at all times during attendance at the clinic. If the client is a minor, and is accompanied by an adult, both should be instructed to wear a mask.

Screening of Clientele

- Massage therapists should not attempt a differential diagnosis of clients who present with signs and symptoms of COVID-19.
- If a therapist encounters a client, who has gone through the screening process and enters a treatment room yet still exhibits signs and symptoms consistent with COVID-19 the therapist should:
 - Establish and maintain a safe physical distance of two metres.
 - Have the client complete hand hygiene.
 - Segregate the client from others in the clinic.
 - Explain the concern that they are symptomatic, discontinue treatment and reschedule the appointment.
 - Advise the client that they should self isolate and contact the local health authority.
 - Clean and disinfect the practice area immediately.

Pre-Treatment Instructions to Client

- Be sure to inform the client where to put their clothing and belongings. These are to be considered as potential sources of contamination, as the virus can live on different surfaces for up to five days. If possible, a wipeable bin should be provided to the client, which can be cleaned and disinfected between clients.
- Be sure to inform the client that the face mask should be worn throughout the treatment. If the client has difficulty breathing with the mask on in the prone position, consider using a side-lying position for treatment as an alternative.

Treatment

- Before starting the treatment, be sure to follow good hand hygiene rules before touching the client.
- If you massage using your feet, they should be washed using the same protocols as described in hand hygiene.

- If a tool (e.g., cupping, hot stones, etc.) is used, as a reminder, they should be cleaned and disinfected between each client using manufacturer recommended cleaning guidelines.
- Once treatment is complete, the therapist should be sure to follow good hand hygiene rules before exiting the room.

Post-Treatment Instructions to Client

- Instruct the client that they should sanitize their hands at the sanitize station before exiting the treatment room.

Booking Next Appointments

- When booking the clients next appointment, be sure to remind the client of the new requirements for the pre-screening document 24 hrs before the next appointment and remind them to be sure to cancel if they are sick, or in any way feeling unwell.

ENVIRONMENTAL CLEANING AND DISINFECTION PROTOCOLS

Because the COVID-19 virus can survive for several days on different surfaces and objects frequent cleaning and disinfection is important to prevent the spread of the disease. There is a difference between cleaning and disinfection. Cleaning has to do with the removal of dirt, dust, and oils. Disinfection has to do with the destruction of germs. Cleaning is required prior to disinfection to remove dirt, dust, and oils to ensure the effectiveness of disinfection.

- In staff break rooms food contact surfaces should be rinsed with fresh water after disinfecting.
- If using disinfectant wipes, the manufacturer’s recommended contact time (i.e., how long the surface remains wet) should be met. Disinfectant wipes are not recommended for heavily soiled surfaces.
- Commonly touched surfaces and shared equipment should be cleaned and disinfected after contact between individuals, even when not visibly soiled. This means not just clients; it includes cleaning between contact by different employees as well. Examples of these include light switches, door handles, touchless thermometers, credit/debit machines, toilets, taps, handrails, counter tops, touch screens, mobile devices, and keyboards. Wherever it is possible, each employee should use their own products (e.g. pens, tablets, mobile devices, tools, etc.). All commonly touched surfaces should be cleaned and disinfected at a minimum between clients.
- Product bottles should be cleaned and disinfected between use with different clients.
- Waiting chairs should be cleaned and disinfected after each client.
- Washrooms should be cleaned and disinfected frequently and a regime for business cleaning and disinfection must be followed and documented.
- Treatment rooms should be cleaned and disinfected after each client.
- Common areas, such as staff rooms or break rooms or waiting rooms or reception areas should be cleaned and disinfected after each use.

- Essential shared facilities, such as telephones, computers, washrooms, and laundry rooms should receive increased cleaning and disinfection. Shared spaces used by multiple clients should be cleaned and disinfected between clients.
- Laundry rooms should be cleaned and disinfected between loads.
- Each business should maintain a written cleaning and disinfection logbook.

TREATMENT TOOLS CLEANING AND DISINFECTION PROTOCOLS

- All tools (includes cups) that are used in conjunction with a treatment or were in the open during the treatment of a client should be cleaned and disinfected between clients.
- For Suction Cups: Here are the steps that are suggested to be followed when reprocessing (meaning using an item on a client and then processing it for safe use on another client):
 - STEP ONE: WASH – Washing should be done in soap and water, with some sort of mechanical force. The aim is to remove all visible organic matter.
 - STEP TWO: RINSE – This just removes the soap off the tools so that the disinfectant is not impeded in any way.
 - STEP THREE: DRY – At this stage in our process shake off the majority of the rinse water, so that the disinfectant is not diluted.
 - STEP FOUR: DISINFECT – We recommend that you use 7.5% hydrogen peroxide (H₂O₂). This is the most environmentally friendly of the chemical disinfectants, though it is still harsh. Make sure that you are wearing gloves and if you tend to splash, eye protection. The cups and tools need to sit in the H₂O₂ for 30 minutes. This is called contact time, and if you are using another high-level disinfectant, please refer to the label for contact time. It is not recommended to reuse the disinfectant.
 - STEP FIVE: RINSE – This is done to make sure the disinfectant is totally rinsed off the tools. This is to protect your client’s skin (and your own!)
 - STEP SIX: DRY – The tools are left to air dry as part of the HLD process. Then they can be restocked to your room and cycled into your treatments.
- For all other tools here are the steps that are suggested to be followed when reprocessing (meaning using an item on a client and then processing it for safe use on another client):
 - This includes cleaning with a recognized product recommended for COVID
 - Continue with regular cleaning protocols with soap and water and adequate drying and safe storage.
 - All equipment must be cleaned between each client.
 - Hot stones must be soaked or sprayed in a COVID recognized cleaning agent.
 - All equipment must then be washed and scrubbed with hot water and soap.
 - Air dry before next use, it is important to ensure stones are dry before reusing.
 - The therapist must allow for adequate cleaning time between clients to ensure stones are cleaned immediately and not left in the open after use.

TREATMENT ROOM CLEANING AND DISINFECTION PROTOCOLS

- Pillows must be contained in a wipeable waterproof cover which can be cleaned and disinfected between use with different clients. A changeable linen cover is not considered sufficient in preventing potential spread of COVID 19.
- Heating Pads must be contained in a wipeable waterproof cover which can be cleaned and disinfected between use with different clients. A changeable linen cover is not considered sufficient in preventing potential spread of COVID 19.
- Sheepskin Padding or other padding materials must be contained in a wipeable waterproof cover which can be cleaned and disinfected between use with different clients. A changeable linen cover is not considered sufficient in preventing potential spread of COVID 19.
- Hydrotherapy devices, like a rice or wheat or “magic” bag should be contained in a wipeable waterproof cover which can be cleaned and disinfected between use with different clients. A changeable linen cover is not considered to be sufficient in preventing potential spread of COVID 19
- The massage table should be cleaned and disinfected between clients. This includes all surfaces of the table, including the legs of the table.
- The place or container where the client places their clothes and belongings should be cleaned and disinfected between clients.
- Anything which may have been touched by either the therapists or the client should be cleaned and disinfected between clients.
- Any product bottles should be cleaned and disinfected between clients.
- If a table heating pad or a thermophore is used, it must have a vinyl cover that is cleaned and disinfected between clients.
- Use of hydrocollators is not recommended at this time.

LINEN AND LAUNDRY PROTOCOLS

- Staff handling dirty linens should be masked for dirty laundry processing.
- Staff should always use hand hygiene immediately before and after handling all linens.

OTHER GENERAL BUSINESS PROTOCOLS

- All businesses should have a workplace illness policy. If a policy does not currently exist or does not align with COVID-19 recommendations, the following should be included:
 - Sick employees must stay home or be sent home from work.
 - For employees housed in workplace accommodations (e.g., work camps), sick employees must be confined to their rooms until cleared for re-entry into the workforce.
 - Sick employees are to use the COVID-19 self assessment tool in the province in which they are working and follow the subsequent directions.
 - When employees go home sick, their work areas must be cleaned and disinfected.

- All Businesses, in scheduling appointments should leave an appropriate amount of time for the cleaning and disinfection of the treatment area. The suggested time would be 30-45 minutes between appointments.
- Massage Therapists should contact their local health authority to receive guidance if they are aware of a client who has visited their clinic within the last 14 days and is now testing (or has tested) positive for COVID-19.