



## Plan for Return to Clinical Practice in Respect of Covid-19

This plan was developed with the goal of reducing the risk of exposure to the virus that causes Covid-19 for both patients and the practitioner within our clinical setting. Here, we identify the actions that the therapist at Aspect Health & Registered Massage Therapy commits to, and that all visiting patients must commit to, in order to resume massage therapy services.

*“Coronavirus is transmitted via liquid droplets when a person coughs or sneezes. The virus can enter through these droplets through the eyes, nose or throat if you are in close contact.*

*The virus is not known to be airborne (e.g. transmitted through the particles floating in the air) and it is not something that comes in through the skin.*

*It can be spread by touch if a person has used their hands to cover their mouth or nose when they cough. That’s why we recommend you cough or sneeze into your arm and wash your hands regularly.”*

Source: <http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19/about-covid-19/how-it-spreads>

The overall aim of these protocols is to reduce potential coronavirus transmission by:

- Required ongoing self-assessment for signs of Covid-19 related illness in both the patient and the therapist
- Reducing all physical, non-treatment related interactions amongst all people within the practice environment
- Hand hygiene requirements
- Avoiding face touching
- Enhanced cleaning protocols
- Appropriate use of personal protective equipment (PPE)
- Meeting professional obligations, particularly related to informed consent and liability insurance

## Self-Assessment for Symptoms of Covid-19: For Patients & Therapists

### Pre-Screening / Prior to Arrival

- Patients will be informed about their responsibilities at the time of booking. A notice will be placed on the website, and the online booking software will send them a copy of these protocols as part of a Covid-19 specific consent form they will be required to sign electronically, prior to arriving at their appointment.
- One day prior to their booked appointment, the patient will be required to complete the online BC COVID-19 Symptom Self-Assessment tool and to stay home if they experience any symptoms of Covid-19.
  - The tool can be found here: <https://bc.thrive.health/covid19/en>
- The therapist will phone the patient one day before their booked appointment to discuss using the self-assessment tool and to verify that it has been done.
- The therapist will use the BC COVID-19 Self-Assessment tool themselves, daily and commits to cancelling all appointments if symptoms appear.

- Symptoms of Covid-19 are similar to other respiratory illnesses and seasonal allergies. An appointment must be cancelled immediately if either the patient or the therapist presents with even mild symptoms that may be signs of Covid-19 including:
  - Fever
  - Cough
  - Chills
  - Shortness of breath
  - Sore throat or pain with swallowing
  - Stuffy or runny nose
  - Loss of sense of smell
  - Headache
  - Muscle aches
  - Fatigue
  - Loss of appetite
- Covid-19 Symptoms may range from mild to severe. Patients are required to cancel appointments if they experience what they determine to be 'just the sniffles,' 'seasonal allergies' or 'just feeling under the weather,' on the day of their appointment.
- As a part of this consent form, patients must commit to understanding that while we've taken all possible measures to minimize risk of viral transmission, the nature of massage therapy means that physical distancing is not possible in the treatment room.
- In order for massage therapy treatment to commence the therapist and patient must agree that the therapeutic benefit of massage therapy outweighs any potential consequence of treatment, including the possibility of viral transmission.
- Patients must confirm that they have not been in contact with anyone displaying illness, or signs and symptoms of Covid-19 within 14 days prior to their treatment.
- Patients with higher risk profiles and/or weakened immune systems should consider alternatives for care and postpone treatment.
  - The patient and the therapist must both agree that the benefits of massage therapy outweigh the potential risks involved.
- Patients who develop even mild illness or symptoms should cancel booked appointments, even without notice.
  - They will not be charged a late cancellation fee if they cancel due to illness.

### Upon Arrival

- The therapist will advise patients of their current Self-Assessment results upon their arrival at the clinic. Patients will be asked to share their own results.
- Upon arrival patients must confirm that they have done a pre-screening and have no signs of Covid-19 as outlined here: <http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19/about-covid-19/symptoms>
- Masks must be worn at all times within the clinic space. If the patient has a mask, they are asked to bring it with them and wear it when they arrive. If the patient does not have a mask, a single-use mask will be provided and they will be asked to wear it upon entering the clinic space.
- Patient must confirm that they have not travelled outside British Columbia within 14 days prior to their appointment.
- The treatment will be cancelled immediately if the patient does not meet the pre-screening criteria upon physical presentation at the clinic.

## Physical Distancing

### Reception Area / Entry into Clinic Space

- Only 1 patient/person is permitted in the clinic space at any given time. Patients must arrive unaccompanied.
  - Minors may be accompanied by a guardian.
- The therapist is the only other person who will be within the clinic space throughout the duration of the patient's appointment.
- The therapist and the patient will both maintain a space of 2 meters (6 feet) distance between each other in all clinic areas outside the treatment room.
- All seating will be removed from the reception area.
  - Patients are not permitted to wait in the clinic reception area before or after the treatment.
- Nothing remains in the clinic space that cannot be disinfected after each touch.
- Appointment times are staggered to reduce the potential of patients crossing paths, and to allow for time in-between appointments for enhanced cleaning.
- Patients are asked to arrive on time and not early or late for appointments.
- Patients are required to wait in their vehicles or outside the building, until the therapist comes to the clinic door to call them in.
- The clinic door will be opened for the patient by the therapist. The clinic door will be re-opened by the therapist at the end of the appointment for the patient to leave without touching the door knob.

### Within the Treatment Room

- It is not possible to maintain physical distancing while in the treatment room.
- Patients will be asked to keep all personal belongings within a basket, which can and will be sanitized between patients.

### Restroom for Patient Use

- The restroom has been posted with proper handwashing guidelines.
- Soap and fresh paper towels for drying will be available at all times.
- A waste bin has been placed next to the restroom door so that patients may use a paper towel to open the door, and then discard it before re-entering the clinic space.

## Hand Hygiene

### Reception Area / Entry into Clinic Space

- Immediately upon entering the clinic space the patient must either:
  - Go directly to the handwashing sink without touching anything inside the clinic and wash their hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds and then dry thoroughly, or
  - Use the hand sanitizer dispenser that is just inside the clinic door.
- If hands are visibly soiled, the patient must opt to wash hands at the handwashing sink.
- The therapist will wash hands thoroughly for at least 20 seconds between patients, before and after disinfecting spaces, before donning gloves and after taking gloves off, and before donning or doffing other PPE like facemasks or shields.
- Hand washing protocols will be posted visibly in the reception area and at sinks.
- Payment occurs in the reception area. Cash will not be accepted at this time. A wireless Point of Sale system with Tap is available for card use. In the event that this does not work, an invoice may be emailed to the patient in order for them to pay it online. The POS machine will be sanitized between each patient.
- Receipts will be emailed, not printed.

## In the Treatment Room

- The therapist will open the door to the treatment room and allow the patient to enter. The therapist will open/close the door before, during and after the treatment as required – reducing the need for the patient to touch the door.
  - Patients will be permitted to open the door for themselves after the treatment to let themselves out of the treatment room.
  - Tissue is available inside the treatment room that the patient may use as a barrier when opening the door.
  - Hand sanitizer is available within the treatment room; patients will be asked to wash or sanitize their hands after the treatment.
  - The door and its doorknobs will be disinfected between each patient.

## Avoid Face Touching

- The therapist will communicate with the patient that coronavirus can be transmitted by touch if droplets are on the hand when it touches the face, as it can transfer those infected droplets to the mouth, nose or eyes.
- Tissue will be available throughout the clinic: in the reception area, treatment room and washroom in order for patients and the therapist to address an itch and/or touch the face for any other reason.
- Intraoral and external TMJ treatments will not be conducted at this time.
- Musculature of the face will not be palpated or treated at this time.

## Enhanced Cleaning

- Additional time has been scheduled between patients to allow for thorough cleaning of the treatment room.
- Visibly soiled surfaces will be cleaned followed by disinfection with a Canada Health Approved for use against Covid-19 disinfectant as listed here:  
<https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/drugs-health-products/disinfectants/covid-19/list.html>
- Common areas will be cleaned and disinfected at least twice a day, including the restroom.
- All high touch surfaces will be cleaned and disinfected between patients, regardless of appearances. High touch surfaces include (but are not limited to):
  - Light switches, door knobs, POS machine, electronic devices, table surfaces, chairs, stools, window coverings, faucets, etc.
  - The treatment table, table levers, face cradle, lotion bottles will be immediately after each treatment.
  - No hydrotherapy supplies, thermophores, table warmers or covers will be used.
  - A Cleaning and Disinfectant for Clinic Setting Poster will be on Display in the reception area, patient restroom and treatment room.
- All linens, including blankets and pillow cases are single use only and will be laundered using high heat, detergent and bleach between each use.
- Bins will be disinfected between each patient before cycling back into use.

## Personal Protective Equipment

- The therapist will wear a face mask at all times in the clinic.
- Patients are required to wear a facemask in the clinic at all times.
- The therapist will wear non-latex gloves if/when appropriate.
  - Gloves may be appropriate when over-use of cleaning and/or chemicals causes skin irritation, or when the therapist's hands or skin of the hands are otherwise injured.
  - Hands will be washed prior to putting the gloves on and immediately after removing them.

## Professional Obligations

### Liability Insurance

- The therapist carries professional liability insurance

### In the Event That a Patient Alleges they Caught COVID-19 from the Therapist

- The therapist will immediately call public health at 8-1-1 to report the alleged transmission, providing both the name of the RMT and the name and contact details of the patient.
  - The patient must agree to the release of this information in order to receive treatment.
- All massage therapy appointments will be cancelled and the Therapist will cease to provide services until Public Health has investigated and provided direction.
- The therapist will immediately self-isolate until Public Health has investigated and provided direction.

### Asymptomatic Spreaders

- Asymptomatic transmission of the coronavirus is an unavoidable risk of practice until we have acquired herd immunity, or there is an effective treatment or vaccine against Covid-19.
- We have put into place protocols to help mitigate that risk as outlined in the preceding documentation.

## Informed Consent

In the current environment of Covid-19 risk, informed consent requires that the patient be informed and understands that:

- Any massage therapy treatment involves some risk of Covid-19 transmission;
- The therapist is following protocol to help reduce or mitigate risk where possible, but that risk cannot be reduced to zero;
- The patient consents to the treatment despite some risk;
- And the RMT will document the patient's consent in advance and at every treatment.