

## INTRODUCTION (June 1 2020)

The intent of this document is to provide guidance to the staff and practitioners of Huronia Chiropractic & Wellness Centre (HCWC) in returning to work as the Ontario Government allows for businesses to reopen and for care to be delivered to all patients. HCWC has a legal duty under Ontario's Occupational Health and Safety Act to take every reasonable action to protect the health and safety of its workers. This duty is particularly important in the context of COVID-19, where there is a need to protect workers and the public from contracting the virus.

All staff working at HCWC shall review this document and apply proper practices related to patient interactions, hygiene and cleaning/disinfection. As well, practitioners should ensure they have protocols in place to replenish their own personal PPE supplies.

Each practitioner will need to use their professional judgement to determine whether they are comfortable returning to practice. HCWC does not expect staff or practitioners to return to work if they do not feel it is appropriate or safe to do so. This document is guidance for those staff and practitioners who have assessed the risk associated with COVID-19 and choose to return to work at HCWC.

As regulated health professionals, members are required to review and follow the 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. In addition, members are expected to prioritize the safety of their patients, staff, colleagues and others visiting their facility.

The CCO & CMTO publications, as well as this document, provide authoritative guidance on how to achieve this overarching duty. Of course, all regulated health care professionals are expected to use professional judgment and provide care and advice that is within their scope of practice.

This guidance document is current as of the date of publication and will continue to be updated as directives from the Ontario Government and our governing bodies change.

To the extent that 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 and this guidance document differ, the practitioners and staff should always apply the higher standard.

Treatment must only be provided when the anticipated benefits of treatment outweigh the risks to the patient and the practitioners, staff and public.

## STAFF PROTOCOLS

### Hygiene

- Wash hands (including forearms and elbows) often with soap and water (for at least 20 seconds) when hands are visibly soiled, before and after any breaks, after changing PPE, at the beginning and end of each shift, immediately before and after any patient interaction/treatment.
- If handwashing is not available, use an alcohol based hand sanitizer with >60% alcohol content (Gloves are not a substitute for proper hand hygiene)
- Sneeze and cough into your sleeve
- If using a tissue, discard immediately and wash hands after (as described above or use hand sanitizer)
- Avoid touching eyes, nose, or mouth, and also avoid touching your mask
- Avoid high-touch areas, where possible, or ensure you clean hands after contact
- Use a clean tissue or your knuckle/elbow to touch light switches
- Any staff who are sick or present with any COVID-like symptoms (including but not limited to: cough, fever, shortness of breath, runny nose, or sore throat) **MUST NOT** be in the workplace (Each member must pass the daily screening)
  - You must immediately self-isolate; do the online government assessment, contact your primary healthcare provider and follow their instructions
  - You must inform Dr. James Anderson or Dr. Stacey Hudson and keep them updated on the status of your symptoms or COVID-19 test results (if applicable)

### Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

- HCWC will provide the clinic with soap & paper towel
- Alcohol based hand sanitizers will be provided in common areas and Check-In
- Practitioners are responsible for their own PPE
  - You must be wearing a surgical grade or higher (Health Canada approved) mask at all times within the facility (NO CLOTH MASKS for practitioners)
  - You are entitled to wear any additional PPE you feel necessary (i.e. face shield, smock/gown, shoe covers, hair caps etc.)
  - The clinic will provide surgical masks to patients who arrive without a mask (patient masks can be fabric, surgical or higher grade)
  - Wear fresh fitted clothes (no hanging or flowing) each day and launder upon returning home (in the hot cycle setting along with any other soiled items from the clinic; sanitize after handling)
  - All staff must wear a mask continuously, and in all areas of the workplace (higher grade masks are acceptable, however cloth masks are only acceptable for support staff (administration) and patients)
  - You must hand wash and/or hand sanitizer after changing a mask

### ■ Donning mask: (see protocol and infographic in resources)

1. Perform hand hygiene
2. Put on the mask; secure elastic loops behind ears
3. Mould the flexible band to the bridge of nose (if applicable)

4. Ensure snug fit to face, below chin with no gaping /venting

■ Doffing mask: (see protocol and infographic in resources)

1. Perform hand hygiene
2. Carefully remove the mask by bending forward slightly, touching only the ties or elastic loops
3. If tied; undo the bottom tie first and then undo the top tie
4. Discard the mask in the garbage (laundry bin for cloth)
5. Perform hand hygiene.

● Gloves

- Not necessary or indicated during manual therapy; refer to appendix regarding literature and safety of hand washing vs. glove use
- If you wear gloves:
  - Refrain from touching your face or mask with gloved hands
  - Wash hands thoroughly before and after wearing gloves

● Physical Barrier

- Clinical support staff having patient interactions are to take place at the reception desk, behind the physical barrier whenever possible

Physical/Social Distancing

- Practitioners will work from their dedicated treatment rooms, or the back office for DC's/RMT's
  - Support staff will direct the patient once they arrive to your office
  - Do not come to the common area to greet or walk your patient out
  - The team will work together to do their best to stagger patient arrivals and departures from the clinic (for social distancing and less foot traffic)
- Clinic Support Staff will work from the barriered reception desk
  - Entering treatment rooms only when necessary and indication must be communicated with the treating practitioner delegated to that room
  - Staff may enter other clinic areas to disinfect (i.e. bathrooms, hallways, entryways, and stairs - only when free of other individuals)
- Casual patient interaction is to be limited to treatment rooms only
- Refrain from socializing with other staff and patients, if necessary, you must be a minimum of 2 meters apart
- Use technology for communication (Intercom & text messaging via mobile devices, rather than in person conversations)
- Avoid sharing equipment/supplies (pens, tablets, electronic devices, tools). Disinfect after each use if sharing cannot be avoided
  - Each practitioner will be provided their own laminated card with a COVID-19 Screening (for patients who did not respond to email or phone screening)
- Limit any casual interactions that normally occur among colleagues at work with the exception if physical distancing can be achieved.
- Keep to your designated areas (back offices and treatment rooms)

- Staff and practitioners are encouraged to take their breaks/meals in their respective areas or leave the facility to a safe socially distanced space
  - It is encouraged to not use the common fridge or microwave in the back; if necessary, you must disinfect after use.

#### Additional Protocols

- Clinic support staff must keep record of all non-scheduled staff and non-patients who enter clinic (i.e. mail delivery, service providers, patient guests/guardians)
  - This will be documented in the tracking sheet and/or treatment notes
  - Contact information must be logged as well (i.e. phone)

#### Environmental Cleaning

“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 the “wipe-twice” method to clean and disinfect: Wipe surfaces with a cleaning agent to clean off soiled areas and wipe again with a disinfectant
- Regular household cleaning and disinfecting products are effective against COVID-19 when used according to the directions on the label
  - Use a disinfectant that has a Drug Identification Number (DIN) and a virucidal claim (efficacy against viruses).
  - Alternatively, use a bleach-water solution (100ml bleach to 900ml water)
  - Health Canada has approved several hard-surface disinfectants and hand sanitizers for use against COVID-19
  - Make sure to follow instructions on the product label to disinfect effectively
- Practitioners should schedule patient appointments to allow for a suitable time for proper cleaning and disinfection of their office, as well as necessary reporting - single bookings for DC’s and limited number of clients per shift for RMTs
- There will be easy access to soap and water (for proper hand cleaning) and alcohol-based hand sanitizer for areas where soap and water are not available
- HCWC will provide the hand sanitizer for the front door, reception desk and washrooms (it will be Health Canada Approved)
  - Please be aware, that if proper hand washing protocols are followed, it is not necessary to use hand sanitizer. If you wish to bring your own sanitizer (purchased, or homemade) that does not meet government standards, it is appropriate to use as long as it was used in conjunction with proper hand washing
  - If hand sanitizer is the only form of disinfecting being used, you must use a Health Canada approved product
- Wash hands before and after cleaning/disinfecting
- Communicate low supply of soap, paper towel, toilet paper, and hand sanitizer so that it can be replenished.

Clinic Surfaces Surface	Surface Disinfectant Frequency
Payment machine (POS)	-After each patient interaction
Office stationery used by public	-After each use
Treatment Surfaces	-With each use
High touch surfaces (doorknobs, doorways, chair arms, railings)	-At start & end of day & hourly -After any patient exhibiting infection symptoms
Reception desk (including all equipment that staff contact/use)	-Hourly & Prior/during employee shifts change -After any patient exhibiting infection symptoms
Telephone, keyboard, mouse, touch screens, mobile devices	-At the start & end of day -Prior/During employee shifts change
Washrooms (light switch, taps, seat, flush handle & knobs)	-After each use -After any patient exhibiting infection symptoms
Table surfaces (face/headrest, thoracic, lumbar, pelvic, and foot/hand/arm pieces, metal paper depressor bar etc.)	-Upon arrival & end of day -After every patient encounter -VERY THOROUGH FACE CRADLE & HEAD REST CLEANING PLEASE!
Therapeutic tools (Cups, GT Tools, toggle, etc.) **Items that can not be properly disinfected are NOT to be used**	-Upon arrival & end of day -After every patient encounter
Treatment room surfaces (doorknobs, desk, chairs)	-Upon arrival & end of day -After every patient contact/encounter
Pens, tablets, stationery items	-After every patient contact/encounter

## CLINIC PROTOCOLS

### Arrival

- Staff and patients will don a mask prior to entry and sanitize hands upon entering
- Staff will travel directly to their designated working area, limiting any contact with other staff or patients
- Staff will immediately “Check-In” and complete the Staff Screening and sign and date
- All communal items (chairs, magazines, pamphlets, products, etc.) have been removed from the waiting room
- There will be no unnecessary staff or patient congregation in the front or central unless physical distance can be achieved

### Washrooms

- Staff and practitioners will use the staff washroom
- Patients/clients will use the public washroom (for emergencies only) and will be disinfected after each use

### Treatment Rooms

- Prior to Treatment
  - Remove difficult to clean items from the treatment area (magazines, water service, upholstered items, hand towels, headrest paper roll, etc.)
  - Disinfect as instructed in “Treatment Surfaces” section above
  - Wash hands with soap and warm water for at least 20+ seconds or use hand sanitizer
  - \*\* Review patient’s COVID-19 screening answers prior to treatment\*\*
  - Staff will be asking the screening questions either on the phone or through email prior to treatment.
  - If a patient doesn’t respond to phone or email, practitioners will be notified and screening will be done at the door
  - In the event a patient does not pass the screening, or they exhibit any signs or symptoms: **PATIENT CAN NOT RECEIVE TREATMENT**
    - Establish a safe distance (2+ meters)
    - Explain concern/criteria, ask them to sanitize, don a surgical mask, exit the facility, advise self isolation, have them complete the government online self-assessment tool and reschedule when they are cleared for care.
    - Thoroughly clean and disinfect the treatment area
    - Practitioners must properly document all information in the patient file (including all other visitors and staff in the clinic at the time)
- Do not DDX COVID-19 (out of our scope of practice)

\*\*If there are any positive cases of COVID-19 confirmed (by patient, staff, practitioner or visitor) the Simcoe Public Health Unit must be notified\*\*

- During Treatment
  - Continuously wear surgical mask (or higher grade if desired)
  - The patient should attend their appointment alone (when possible)
  - Resanitize if the practitioner coughs or sneezes while providing care
  - Use professional judgement and risk assessment to determine if additional PPE (i.e. face shields, smock/gown) is warranted due to increased risk

- Post Treatment
  - Additional time recommended for proper disinfecting and record keeping
  - Immediately wash hands with soap and water for at least 20+ seconds
  - All soiled linens (i.e. sheets, towels, pillows, gowns etc.) are to be removed and stored in a closed container (lid or draw-string) and removed by the gloved treating practitioner to be laundered (in high heat setting with soap)
  - Disinfect as instructed in “Environmental Cleaning -Treatment Surfaces”

#### Practitioner-Patient Interactions Related to COVID-19

In light of the overwhelming and uncertain nature of COVID-19, many patients will seek practitioner’s advice and opinions on the topic. It is crucial that all licensed and regulated health care professionals refrain from commenting or discussing topics that are outside of their scope of practice.

It is inevitable that staff and practitioners may have varying knowledge and opinions on the information pertaining to COVID-19. It is critical that HCWC present as a unified front. It is strongly encouraged to reference and communicate only relevant and formally documented content that falls within the practitioners designated scope of practice (See Appendix for examples). If a patient inquiries about something that is not within the practitioner’s scope or is not well understood, please refer them to an appropriate resource, or to their primary care physician for advice.

#### Departure

- Remove any accumulated soiled laundry from the day (in a closed bin/bag)
- Patients, staff and practitioners will sanitize their hands upon leaving the clinic

#### **STAFF ARRIVAL SCREENING:**

1. I will be wearing the required PPE (as discussed in our policies and procedures manual) during my entire shift at HCWC.
2. Have you had a fever, new onset of cough, worsening of a chronic cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing?
3. Did you have contact with anyone with acute respiratory illness or have travelled outside of Canada within the last 14 days?
4. Do you have a confirmed case of Covid-19 or had close contact with a confirmed case of Covid-19?
5. Do you have two (2) or more of the following symptoms: sore throat, runny nose/sneezing, nasal congestion, hoarse voice, difficulty swallowing, decrease or loss of sense of smell, chills, headaches, unexplained fatigue/malaise, diarrhea, abdominal pain, or nausea/vomiting?
6. If you are over 65 years of age, are you experiencing any of the following: delirium, falls, acute functional decline, or worsening of chronic conditions?

## PATIENT PROTOCOLS

To return to treatment, these are the following guidelines that you (the patient), your practitioner, office staff, and our clinic must follow for everyone's safety. HCWC has taken the following precautions for the safety of its patients, staff, and practitioners:

- Installed signage (passive screening, proper hand washing & hand sanitization protocols) and updated website information related to COVID-19
- Check-In Station located inside the entry of the building for proper sanitization and screening before entering the facility
- Plexiglass barriers installed at the reception desk
- Rearranged our office layout and flow to provide safe social distancing
  - Limited seating area in the waiting room; asking patients to wait in their car if late or early to an appointment.
  - Patients will be directed straight to treatment rooms
  - Practitioners will remain in their respective offices or work areas to decrease traffic
- Removed soft materials (magazines, toys, etc.)
- Following extensive cleaning and disinfection protocols from Public Health Ontario and professional regulatory bodies (i.e. CCO & CMTO)
  - Thorough cleaning and disinfecting of all diagnostic and treatment tools, and treatment surfaces before and after each patient visit
    - Health Canada approved and hospital grade disinfectants
- Minimized staffing and decreased patient bookings to allow for more extensive disinfecting protocols and to decrease the flow of traffic
  - To limit the number of individuals within the facility
  - Allow for easier social distancing from other staff and patients
- Following the PPE protocols of the Ministry of Health and Public Health Ontario, as well as our professional governing bodies
  - Staff and practitioners wear surgical masks (or higher) at all times
- Have worked to create a safe patient flow schedule
- Have trained all staff with new return to work practices and requirements

## Booking

- Active screening will be conducted online via email (attached to your email confirmation & reminder) before your scheduled appointment
  - This form is to be completed the day before of your scheduled appointment
  - If not, you will be required to complete one at your appointment
  - Your practitioner will also screen you in-person
  - If you do not pass the screening survey, you will be asked to reschedule
- Initial Chiropractic consultations will be scheduled for 30 minutes to allow for sufficient time for patient screening, health history, examination, treatment, and disinfection of treatment room and proper documentation
- Massage Therapy appointments will temporarily be limited to 60 minutes only
  - To accommodate the number of patients requiring care
  - To encourage clinically necessary treatments only (no relaxation therapy)
  - These sessions will also have additional time allotted after appointments for extensive disinfecting protocols and proper documentation

### Before Arriving

- Acquire a mask (fabric or surgical); face coverings are required within the facility
- Have you completed the COVID-19 Screening that was emailed to you?
  - Yes, and you have passed with no concerning answer
    - Proceed to your appointment (Do not arrive more than 5mins prior)
  - Yes, but did not pass the screening or have since developed symptoms or contact with a positive COVID-19 individual. Please do the following:
    - Call HCWC (705) 739-1155 to cancel your appointment ● No cancellation fees will be incurred
    - Wait to rebook for at least 14 days
    - Complete the Ontario Government's Self-Assessment Tool online
    - Contact an appropriate medical authority to report your condition and seek advice and treatment if necessary (primary physician)
    - Practitioners are required to report suspected or confirmed cases
- In an effort to decrease handling of soiled garments, for chiropractic care, if you typically change into a medical gown or shorts, please dress in clothing that allows the treating area to be accessible, or bring items to change into (i.e. tank top, loose fitting clothing, shorts etc.)

### Arrival

- Arrive no earlier than 5 minutes prior to your appointment time, there will not be a space in the clinic to wait for your scheduled appointment
  - You will be directed straight into the designated treatment room
- All patients are required to continuously wear a face covering within the clinic
- Enter the clinic as normal through the front door.
  - If you require assistance, call our Clinic Support Staff upon arrival
  - Sanitize at the Check-In Station on the left as you enter.
  - If you do not have a mask or face covering to wear, please ask staff to give you one.
  - Signage will be located near the entrance with instructions for wearing and removing masks
  - Review the COVID-19 Screening criteria before entering the facility
- If your treatment is delayed, our Clinic Support staff will call to notify you
- No additional guests or family members will be permitted to accompany you during your appointment, unless you require a guardian or caregiver
  - If family members have consecutively booked appointments, it is the practitioner's discretion to allow more than one patient in the room
- The front washroom is for emergencies only and the second washroom is for staff only. If you require the use of the washroom, we ask that you let staff know so it can be disinfected after use.
- Maintain physical distancing of at least two metres whenever possible

### During Appointment

- Patients are required to wear masks while in the facility and during treatment
- Appropriate PPE (medical grade masks) will be worn by your practitioner at all times; including during examination and treatment

### Departure

- You'll be ask to pay for your appointment
- We are encouraging patients to move towards a less contact model of payment
  - HCWC will now accept E-transfers as payment to [hcwcreception@hotmail.com](mailto:hcwcreception@hotmail.com)
  - Emailed receipts will be done the day after your appointment.
  - Use contactless payment (tap debit/credit) at reception if possible
  - We prefer no cash payments
  - Limit the exchange of paper; have invoices emailed instead of printed
- Preferably, treatment invoices will be emailed to patients, not printed
- Exit the clinic through the front entrance
- Sanitize after leaving the facility, before touching your mask to remove it

### PATIENT SCREENING QUESTIONNAIRE

1. I have access to a mask (i.e fabric, surgical, N95 or some form of face covering) that I will wear to my scheduled appointment.
2. I understand that, in an effort to decrease soiled items, chiropractic patients who typically use medical gowns/shorts will bring/wear appropriate attire (i.e. tank top, shorts, loose clothing etc.) that allow access to the treatable area (if needed).
3. I will not enter the facility more than 5 minutes prior to my scheduled appointment. Additionally, I acknowledge that if I am late to my appointment, my practitioner may not be able to accommodate my visit due to new clinic policies.
4. Despite necessary measures and precautions (i.e. PPE, sanitization, social distancing etc.), I acknowledge the contagious nature of COVID-19. I assume the risk that I may be exposed by attending an in-person treatment at HCWC.
5. Have you had a fever, new onset of cough, worsening of a chronic cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing?
6. Did you have contact with anyone with acute respiratory illness or have travelled outside of Canada within the last 14 days?
7. Do you have a confirmed case of Covid-19 or had close contact with a confirmed case of Covid-19?
8. Do you have two (2) or more of the following symptoms: sore throat, runny nose/sneezing, nasal congestion, hoarse voice, difficulty swallowing, decrease or loss of sense of smell, chills, headaches, unexplained fatigue/malaise, diarrhea, abdominal pain, or nausea/vomiting?
9. If you are over 65 years of age, are you experiencing any of the following: delirium, falls, acute functional decline, or worsening of chronic conditions?

→ If responses pass ALL of the screening questions: Proceed with treatment

→ If responses to ANY of the screening questions fail: Postpone Treatment

#### PATIENT/CLINIC RESOURCES

- COVID-19 Patient Screening Guidance (May 17, 2020):  
[http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/publichealth/coronavirus/docs/2019\\_patient\\_screening\\_guidance.pdf](http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/publichealth/coronavirus/docs/2019_patient_screening_guidance.pdf)
- Information for the Public: <https://covid-19.ontario.ca/>
- Ontario Government COVID-19 Online Self-Assessment Tool:  
<https://covid-19.ontario.ca/self-assessment/>
- CCO Returning for Treatment - A Patient Guide:  
[https://www.cco.on.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/9K-CCO-Patient-Return-to-Treatment\\_D9.pdf](https://www.cco.on.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/9K-CCO-Patient-Return-to-Treatment_D9.pdf)
- General Public Mask Guidelines (donning & doffing instructions)  
<https://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/documents/ncov/factsheet/factsheet-covid-19-how-to-wear-mask.pdf?la=en>
- Handwashing:  
<https://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/documents/j/2009/jcyh-handwash.pdf?la=en>
- Hand Rubbing with Sanitizer:  
<https://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/documents/j/2009/jcyh-handrub.pdf?la=en>
- Physical Distancing:  
<https://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/documents/ncov/factsheet/factsheet-covid-19-guide-physical-distancing.pdf?la=en>

STAFF RESOURCES (May 21, 2020)

- Information for Healthcare Providers:  
<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/health-professionals.html>
- COVID-19 Reference Document for Symptoms  
[http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/publichealth/coronavirus/docs/2019\\_reference\\_doc\\_symptoms.pdf](http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/publichealth/coronavirus/docs/2019_reference_doc_symptoms.pdf)
- Guidance for Return to Practice for CCO Members (May 15, 2020):  
<https://www.cco.on.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/GuidanceCOVIDmay152020.Pdf>
- Returning to Work for CCO Members Infographic:  
[https://cco.on.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/9J-CCO-Member-Return-to-Work\\_D15.pdf](https://cco.on.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/9J-CCO-Member-Return-to-Work_D15.pdf)
- CMTO Practice Guidelines for Massage Therapists (May 19, 2020):  
<https://www.cmta.com/assets/COVID-19-Pandemic-Draft-Practice-Guidance-for-Massage-Therapists.pdf>
- Universal Mask Use in Healthcare:  
<https://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/documents/ncov/ipac/faq-covid-19-universal-mask-use-health-care.pdf?la=en>
- Please see the following resources for use of PPE from Public Health Ontario:
  - Public Health Ontario Resources:  
<https://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/diseases-and-conditions/infectious-diseases/respiratory-diseases/novel-coronavirus/health-care-resources>
  - Public Ontario Guide for PPE:  
<https://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/documents/ncov/ipac/ppe-recommended-steps.pdf?la=en>
  - Health and Safety Guidance During COVID-19 for Physician and Primary Care Provider Employers:  
<https://www.pshsa.ca/resources/health-and-safety-guidance-during-covid-19-for-physician-and-primary-care-provider-employers>
- Cleaning Guidelines:  
<https://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/documents/ncov/factsheet-covid-19-environmental-cleaning.pdf?la=en>
- Government of Ontario Response:  
<https://www.ontario.ca/page/how-ontario-is-responding-covid-19#section-0>
- Mental Health Resources:  
<https://www.ontario.ca/page/covid-19-support-people#mental-health>
- Simcoe-Muskoka Health Unit:  
<http://www.simcoemuskokahealth.org/Promos/Novel-Coronavirus>
- Telehealth Ontario Toll Free: 1-866-797-0000