

Interim Guidelines for Return to Practice (COVID-19)

Registrants / Interim Guidelines for Return to Practice (COVID-19)

Latest update: January 25, 2022

The Big Picture

- Communicable disease prevention, including COVID-19 prevention, involves assessing the level of risk in your practice environment, applying fundamental safety practices (below), communicating your protocols to everyone who enters your practice environment, and updating measures and safeguards as required.
- Foundational elements of communicable disease prevention include:
 - No one should enter the clinic if they are sick or show signs of communicable disease.
 - Masks are required by public health authorities in all public indoor settings.
 - Physical distancing in waiting rooms and other high traffic areas is advised.
 - Hand hygiene must be followed.
 - RMTs must not provide in-person care if they are sick, show signs of communicable disease, or are waiting for the results of a COVID-19 test.
 - Maintain a clean work environment.
 - Ensure adequate ventilation.



- Keep up to date on guidance from [WorkSafeBC](#) and the [Provincial Health Officer](#).
- RMTs are reminded that CMTBC's [Practice Environment Standard of Practice](#) is in effect. The Practice Environment Standard promotes patient and practitioner safety through all aspects of treatment delivery.

Communicable Disease Prevention

RMTs are expected to take reasonable steps to manage health and safety for everyone in their practice environment; this includes preventing the transmission of communicable diseases, including COVID-19.

On January 21, 2022 Dr. Bonnie Henry announced an [order](#) to employers and workers to re-activate/implement a COVID-19 safety plan as part of communicable disease prevention. This is in response to the recent surge of infections caused by the Omicron variant.

Whether or not you need to implement additional measures will depend on your current policies and measures in place. You must use your professional judgement to determine if additional measures specific to your practice environment are needed. Any changes or additional measures put in place must be clearly communicated to patients.

Refer to [WorkSafeBC](#) for further information regarding COVID-19 prevention. WorkSafeBC may inspect your clinic for measures you have put in place to prevent the transmission of communicable disease, including COVID-19.

Pillars of responsible care that support the goal of communicable disease prevention are outlined in this section.

1. Prior to the appointment: Communicate with patients and all who enter the practice environment.

- Prior to arrival at the clinic and/or at the time of booking, patients should be informed of the following:
 - Patients must arrive at their appointment with no signs of communicable disease. If they have signs of COVID-19, patients can contact public health at 8-1-1, if  direction on next steps is needed.
 - Advise patients of available options regarding the use of personal protective

equipment, including masks. Masks are required by public health authorities in all public indoor settings for individuals aged 5+.

- Advise individuals of additional requirements they will be asked to meet on arrival at the appointment (e.g., hand washing upon arrival, arriving on-time for appointment).
- Explain the rationale for ongoing compliance with safety protocols and guidance from the PHO and WorkSafeBC.

2. Physical Distancing

- Physical distancing helps decrease transmission of the novel coronavirus as well as other communicable diseases.
- Physical distancing of 2 metres/6 feet should be maintained in clinic areas other than the treatment room, as best as possible within the practice setting.
- Physical distancing considerations include:
 - Reducing congestion in high traffic areas (e.g., waiting room),
 - Encouraging patients to arrive on-time for their appointment,
 - Encouraging patients to arrive unaccompanied unless the patient requires parent/guardian, or needs assistance.

3. Hand Hygiene

- Patient cleans their hands upon entry to the practice environment.
- RMT washes their hands often, as appropriate.
- Hand-washing protocols are posted in reception area, in the treatment room, and at sinks (including bathroom for patient's use if applicable).

4. Face Touching Avoidance – e.g., avoid touching eyes, mouth, nose

- Share information about the reason for 'no face touching'.
- Provide tissues if an itch must be addressed; tissues must be available in reception, treatment room, washroom.
- If RMT is accustomed to sweating during her or his work, a head band should be used or a hand towel should be available to wipe the forehead and face as required to avoid sweat from dripping into eyes, necessitating touch.



5. Enhanced Cleaning

- All therapists and staff will practice consistent cleaning protocols.
- Clean visibly soiled surfaces, followed by disinfection.
- Linens must be single use only.
- Remove all clutter, fabric furnishings and decorations that cannot be sanitized.
- Frequently clean and disinfect:
 - handles: doors, cabinets, faucets, fridge, microwave, etc.,
 - electronic devices and phones,
 - arm rests of chairs,
 - desks and table surfaces,
 - water coolers,
 - washrooms.
- Ensure the treatment room is thoroughly cleaned between patients:
 - Clean equipment and supplies (table, table levers, lotion bottles, hydrotherapy supplies, etc.) after each patient.
- Air purifier / filter in the treatment room may be helpful if the room has no windows or external air exchange. Use of an air purifier/filter is at the RMT's preference and discretion. View [WorkSafeBC resources about ventilation and air circulation](#).

6. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and mask use

September 2021: Mask are required by public health authorities in all public indoor settings for individuals aged 5+.

An RMT may decide whether to use additional PPE for themselves and/or for their patient/s.

- The RMT must have masks available for patient and RMT use.
- An RMT must adjust treatment positioning and make other accommodations as required for patient comfort to accommodate patients wearing a mask.
- The RMT may refuse to treat a patient who refuses to wear a mask provided that (1) this is communicated to the patient in advance of the appointment, and (2) the RMT



considers accommodations or provides alternatives for patients who are unable to wear a mask.

- › It is the RMT's responsibility to use and clean or replace their mask correctly. There are many kinds of masks in use and CMTBC is not prescriptive about protocols; please follow BCCDC recommendations.
- › RMTs may use their professional judgment to decide whether to use other commercially available PPE.

7. Professional Obligations

- › RMTs are reminded that if they are exhibiting signs of a communicable disease or if they are waiting for a COVID test result, they **must not** provide in-person care and should not be in attendance at clinics or other practice settings where other staff and patients are present.
- › CMTBC regulates massage therapists, and not clinics. CMTBC's guidelines apply to RMTs and RMT-practice; it is an RMT's responsibility to clarify the guidelines in their practice, rather than rely upon clinic owners to do so.
- › RMTs who practice at multiple locations, including mobile, must be particularly conscientious about others' safety protocols while also maintaining their own protocol.
- › Professional liability insurance:
 - › RMTs in practice are required by CMTBC's Bylaws to carry [professional liability insurance](#).
 - › The coverage terms of policies can vary.
 - › RMTs are advised to follow the guidelines or requirements of their insurance provider as long as the insurer's guidelines do not conflict with or contradict CMTBC's guidelines.
- › RMTs who are employees of a clinic, spa, or who have employment contracts:
 - › RMTs are bound as health professionals by their obligation and duty to CMTBC, irrespective of employment agreements.
 - › RMTs in this work setting must clarify their relationship with their employer.
 - › An RMT should consult legal counsel if needed, as CMTBC does not provide legal advice; or, alternatively, if the RMT is a member of a professional association, the association may provide advice and/or support.



Resources

- › [CMTBC, Practice Environment Standard of Practice](#)
- › [Provincial and Regional Restrictions, Government of BC COVID-19 response](#)
- › [WorkSafeBC, COVID-19 prevention](#)
- › [WorkSafe BC, Occupational Health and Safety Guideline G-P2-21 Communicable disease prevention](#)
- › [BC's response to COVID-19](#)
- › [BC's COVID-19 Immunization Plan](#)
- › [BC Centre for Disease Control, COVID-19](#)
- › [BC Centre for Disease Control, When to get a COVID-19 Test](#)
- › [BC Centre for Disease Control, Community-Based Health Care](#)
- › [BC Centre for Disease Control, Physical Distancing](#)
- › [BC Centre for Disease Control, Hand washing](#)
- › [BC Centre for Disease Control, Hand Hygiene Poster](#)
- › [BC Centre for Disease Control, Environmental Cleaning and Disinfectant for Health-Care and Clinical Settings](#)
- › [BC Centre for Disease Control, Masks](#)
- › [BC Centre for Disease Control, Travel Restrictions](#)
- › [PICNet: Provincial Infection Control Network of British Columbia, Guidelines and Tools](#)
- › [Government of Canada, Hard-surface disinfectants and hand sanitizers](#)
- › [BC Office of the Human Rights Commissioner, A human rights approach to mask-wearing during COVID-19 pandemic.](#)
- › [BC Officer of the Human Rights Commissioner, A human rights approach to proof of vaccination during the COVID-19 pandemic](#)



Additional Resources

RMTs should also consult the following:

- [CMTBC's Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQs\)](#) – FAQs will be updated to reflect RMTs' questions
- [Previous version of the interim guidelines, for record-keeping purposes \(PDF\)](#).

CMTBC's Interim Guidelines for Return to Practice were developed in consultation with [Iridia Medical Inc.](#) (team led by Dr. Allan Holmes, MD, FRCP), and a panel of RMTs.

Please note that CMTBC's Interim Guidelines contain many links to resources on external websites which are frequently updated. If you encounter a broken link, please email info@cmtbc.ca to advise CMTBC.

[Interim Guidelines for Return to Practice \(COVID-19\)](#)

[FAQs: RMTs' return to practice, interim guidelines \(COVID-19\)](#)

[Quality Assurance](#)

[Reinstatement of Registration](#)

[Practising/Non-Practising Status Change](#)

[Registration Renewal](#)

[Professional Liability Insurance](#)

[Standard First Aid & CPR-C](#)

[Criminal Record Check for RMTs](#)

[Notices to the Profession](#)

[Resources for Registrants](#)



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