

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 therapists at Mickelson Chiropractic and Massage 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 a copy of these protocols.
- A Covid-19 specific consent form will require a signature at the time of arrival for appointment.
- One day prior to the 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 patient will be called one day before their booked appointment to discuss the use of the self-assessment tool and to verify that it has been done.
- The therapist/clinic staff will use the BC COVID-19 Self-Assessment tool herself, daily and commits to cancel 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 her 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.
- Patients 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.

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 hand sanitizer inside the clinic when first entering.
- 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 putting gloves/PPE on and taking off.
- Hand washing protocols will be posted visibly in the reception area and at sinks.
- Payment occurs in the reception area, a wireless point of sale system with tap feature may be used or arrange e-transfer for payment. Receipt can be emailed to the patient. Cash is not preferred but may be handled provided that anyone doing so washes their hands immediately afterwards.

Physical Distancing Reception Area / Entry into Clinic Space

- Staff, RMT and patient must maintain 2 metres / 6 feet of distance in clinic areas other than the treatment room, as best as possible within the practice setting.

- All clutter, fabric furnishings (some replaced with vinyl) and decorations that cannot be sanitized after touch have been removed.
- Appointments will be staggered with only one-way flow of traffic to minimize hazard.
- Patient must arrive unaccompanied unless patient is a minor who requires parent/guardian, or infirm and needs assistance.
- Patient is required to wait outside in their car and not in reception – they will be called or texted when it's time to enter.
- RMT will greet patient and open the door for them or the door will be open for easy entry to clinic and RMT will greet patient at entry.
- At end of treatment, RMT will accompany patient to the exit and open the door for them (using a hand towel or other sanitized barrier).

THERAPISTS' SHARED AREAS

- Therapists will have separate, distanced workstations

Restroom for Patient Use

- The restroom has been equipped with a soap dispenser and paper towel, and proper handwashing guidelines are noted on the wall chart.
- 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.

Within the Treatment Room

- It is not possible to maintain physical distancing while in the treatment room.
- Pre-screening, physical distancing, hand hygiene, and enhanced cleaning help reduce the risk of transmission, and enable return to practice while minimizing risk of harm.
- Patients will be asked to hang all personal belongings on the hooks provided.
- All areas will be sanitized before and after use.
- 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.
- Tissue is available inside the treatment room that the patient may use as a barrier when opening the door if needed.
- Hand sanitizer is available within the treatment room; patients will be asked to wash or sanitize their hands after the treatment.
- The door and doorknobs will be disinfected between each patient.
- The therapist will wear a mask and a face shield at all times.
- Patients are required to wear face masks that cover both the nose and mouth at all times within the clinic space.
- 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.

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 that patients and the therapist may use tissue to address an itch and/or touch the face for any other reason.

- The therapist will wear a face mask at all times.
- Patients are required to wear face masks that cover both the nose and mouth at all times within the clinic space.
- Internal 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.html>
 - <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/cleaning-disinfection.html>
 - <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 or more, 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, or table warmers 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.
- The window in the treatment room will be utilized in between each patient and/or during the treatment upon the agreement of both the patient and the therapist.

- Pedal push bins will be disinfected between each patient before cycling back into use.
- A disinfected plastic bin has been placed in the treatment room for dirty laundry.
- A PVC table cover has been added to the massage table for easy disinfecting.

Personal Protective Equipment

- The therapist will wear a face mask at all times in the clinic. Face shield and goggles are available if needed.
- The therapist's face mask will be changed in-between appointments.
- The therapist's face shield will be disinfected and/or changed in-between appointments.
- The therapist will wear a snap button scrub and a PVC apron which can be disinfected after each client.
- If patients have their own fabric/3 ply face mask, they are requested to bring it. If they do not have a 3ply Paper or disposable face mask, one will be provided to them at the time of their treatment.
- The therapist will wear non-latex or 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.
- Gloves may be worn by the therapist at the patient's request.
- Patients are required to wear a face mask in the clinic at all time.

Professional Obligations Liability Insurance

- The therapist carries professional liability insurance through Wilson M. Beck as provided through the Registered Massage Therapist Association of BC.
- RMTs have a professional obligation to obtain informed consent to treatment, consistent with CMTBC's Consent Standard of Practice.
- No guarantees have been made by the therapist that the patient may not come in contact with COVID-19 at or during an appointment.

In the Event That a Patient Tests Positive for Covid-19 Having Been to a Massage Therapy Appointment within the 14-days Prior to Onset of Symptoms

- The patient will contact the therapist and inform her of positive test results and possible transmission of the virus immediately.

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.
- RMT is working in a team setting, it is the RMT's duty to immediately inform his or her colleagues of transmission risk.
- The therapist will immediately self-isolate for 14 days and until Public Health has investigated and provided direction.

In the Event That the Therapist Catches COVID-19 or Displays Symptoms of Covid-19

- The therapist will immediately self-isolate.
- The therapist will call public health at 8-1-1 to report the symptoms and request access to Covid-19 testing
- **If testing is granted:**
 - All massage therapy appointments will be cancelled and the Therapist will cease to provide services until test results are returned negative.

- If testing proves positive the therapist will follow Public Health directives in informing patients treated over the previous 14 days about potential transmission.
- **If testing is not granted:**
 - All massage therapy appointments will be cancelled and the Therapist will cease to provide services for a minimum of 10-days beyond the onset of symptoms, and/or until symptoms cease.

In the Event That the Therapist Comes into Close Contact with Someone Showing Signs of Illness or Tests Positive for Covid-19

- The therapist will immediately self-isolate.
- All massage therapy appointments will be cancelled and the therapist will cease to provide services until:
 - The close contact has been tested for Covid-19 and the results proved negative and the therapist is well,
 - OR after self-isolating for 14 days and having no symptoms of fever develop.
 - OR being cleared by a public health official.

Asymptomatic Spreaders

- Asymptomatic transmission of the coronavirus is an unavoidable risk of practice until we've 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.
- No guarantees have been made by the therapist that the patient may not come in contact with COVID-19 at or during an appointment.

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.
- The RMT will document the patient's consent in advance and at every treatment via the consent form provided.