

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 Clayton Heights Chiropractic commits to, and that all visiting patients must commit to, in order to resume receiving 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 patients will be responsible for reviewing them prior to their appointment.
- Patients will be contacted via e-mail 48 hours prior to their appointment with a link to the online pre-screening form.
- Patients are asked to complete the online pre-screening form and complete the BC COVID-19 self-assessment tool 24-48 hours prior to each treatment. The therapist will complete the assessment daily also.
- 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
- COVID-19 Symptoms may range from mild to severe. **Patients are required to cancel appointments if they experience what they determine to be ‘just feeling under the weather,’ on the day of their appointment.**
- 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 will be required to sign an additional consent form at their next appointment. As a part of the 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 and a risk of viral transmission does exist.
- Patients with higher risk profiles and/or weakened immune systems should consider alternatives for care and/or postpone treatment.
- Patients who develop even mild illness or symptoms must cancel booked appointments, even without notice.
 - They will not be charged a late cancellation fee if they cancel due to illness.

Upon Arrival

- Masks must be worn before entering the clinic, and for the duration of the treatment.
- Upon entering the clinic, patients must wash their hands at the sanitizing station.
- Temperature will be taken and recorded by the therapist before proceeding with treatment.
- Patients will once again be screened for any COVID-19 symptoms by the therapist.
- Patients must confirm that they do not have any symptoms in order to continue with their massage treatment.
- 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.

Physical Distancing

Reception Area / Entry into Clinic Space

- The therapist and the patient will both maintain a space of 2 meters (6 feet) distance between each other in all clinic areas that are outside the treatment room.
- Patients are not permitted to lounge in the clinic reception area before or after the treatment.
- Water is available upon request.
- Nothing remains in the clinic space that cannot be disinfected after each touch.
- Appointment times are scheduled to reduce the potential of patients crossing paths, and to allow for time in-between sessions 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 elsewhere outside the clinic until their treatment start time.
- The clinic door will already be open for the patient. If it is not open, please knock and it will be opened for you. Please do not touch any door handles while in the clinic space.

Within the Treatment Room

- The therapist is the only other person who will be in the treatment room throughout the duration of the patient's appointment. Please do not bring any children or other guests into the treatment room.
 - Exceptions will be made for minors who wish for a guardian to be present or patients who require a caregiver.
- The therapist will open the door for the patient and the patient can take a seat in the chair in the treatment room. The therapist will stand in the opposite corner of the room to do the interview.
- The therapist will wash their hands at the sink in the treatment room prior to any treatment or assessment that involves touching the patient.
- Patients will be asked to keep all personal belongings within the bin or on the chair that is supplied for them, which can and will be sanitized between patients.
- Patients will be asked to remove from the clinic everything that they bring with them.
- After treatment, the patient will wait for the therapist to knock on the door. Once the therapist confirms the patient is ready, the therapist will open the door for the patient and the patient can proceed directly to the reception area to pay, book future treatments, etc. Patients are asked not to touch any door handles while in the clinic space or treatment room.

Hand Hygiene

Reception Area / Entry into Clinic Space

- Immediately upon entering the clinic space the patient must sanitize their hands at the sanitizing station.
- The therapist will wash hands thoroughly for at least 20 seconds between patients, before and after disinfecting spaces, and before donning or doffing other PPE like face masks.
- Payment occurs in the reception area. We prefer credit card payments instead of cash at this time.

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.
 - The door and doorknobs will be disinfected between each patient.

Enhanced Cleaning

- Additional time has been scheduled between patients to allow for thorough cleaning of the treatment room.
- All high touch surfaces will be cleaned and disinfected between patients, regardless of appearances. High touch surfaces include (but are not limited to):
 - The treatment table, table levers, face cradle, lotion bottles will be disinfected immediately after each treatment.
- All linens, including blankets and pillowcases are single use only and will be laundered using high heat and detergent between each use.
- A disinfected plastic bin has been placed in some treatment rooms. The patient will be asked to keep all of their personal belongings in this bin or on the chair during the treatment.
 - Bins and chairs will be disinfected between each patient.

Personal Protective Equipment

- The therapist will wear a face mask at all times throughout the duration of the treatment.
- Patients must wear a face mask while in the clinic and throughout the duration of the treatment. Patients are encouraged to bring and wear their own face mask.
- Patients' face masks must not have an exhalation valve.
 - If patients have their own fabric face mask, they are requested to clean it prior to use, and to arrive at the clinic wearing it.

Avoid Face Touching

- While in the clinic, patients are asked to avoid touching their face. If a patient must touch their face, for example to address an itch, please use one of the available tissues to do so.

Professional Obligations

Liability Insurance

- The therapist carries professional liability insurance through Lackner McLennan Insurance Ltd. as acknowledged by the College of Massage Therapists of British Columbia (CMTBC).
- The therapist is following all the health and safety guidelines outlined by the CMTBC and the Provincial Health Officer and they are taking all reasonable precautions to clean and disinfect the clinic and all the surfaces within the treatment room.
- 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 under these circumstances 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.

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 14-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, 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 at every treatment.