

Equilibra Registered Massage Therapy and Reflexology

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 Equilibra Registered Massage Therapy & Reflexology commit 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 link to these protocols as part of a Covid-19 specific consent form they will be required to sign electronically, prior to their appointment.
- Within 24 hours 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 therapists will use the BC COVID-19 Self-Assessment tool daily and commit to canceling 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

- 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.
- The patient will be required to sign (electronically) a consent and liability waiver with respect to Covid-19 prior to **every 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.
- Patients with higher risk profiles and/or weakened immune systems should consider alternatives for care and postpone treatment.
- 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 who develop even mild illness or symptoms must cancel booked appointments, even without notice.
 - o They will not be charged a late cancellation fee if they cancel due to illness.

Upon Arrival

- The therapist will advise the patient of their current results from online BC COVID-19 Symptom Self-Assessment tool.
- Patients will be asked to confirm their own current results from online BC COVID-19 Symptom Self-Assessment tool.
- 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 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

- The therapist and the patient will both maintain a space of 2 meters (6 feet) distance between each other where possible.
- Patients are not permitted to lounge 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 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 until the therapist comes to call them in.

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 plastic basket, which will be sanitized between patients.
- Patients will be asked to remove from the clinic everything that they bring with them.

Restroom for Patient Use

- Soap and fresh towels for drying will be available at all times.

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, wash their hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds and then dry thoroughly, or
 - Use hand sanitizer provided at reception.
- If hands are visibly soiled, the patient must opt to wash hands at the 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, goggles or shields.
- Hand washing protocols will be posted visibly at the sink.
- Payment occurs in the reception area. Cash will not be accepted at this time. A 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 that they 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 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 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 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.

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 Covid19 disinfectant
- 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, doorknobs, POS machine, electronic devices, table surfaces, chairs, stools, window coverings, faucets, etc.
 - The treatment table, face cradle, lotion bottles.
- All linens, including blankets and pillowcases are single use only and will be laundered between each use.
- A disinfected plastic bin has been placed in the treatment room. The patient will be asked to keep all of their personal belongings in this bin during the treatment. Post treatment, this same bin will be used to carry used linens to the laundry room for washing.
- Bins will be disinfected between each patient before cycling back into use.
- Nothing remains in the clinic space that cannot be disinfected after each touch.

Personal Protective Equipment

- The therapist will wear a face mask at all times and goggles or face shield when working supine with a patient.

- The therapist's face shield/goggles will be disinfected and/or changed in-between appointments.
- The therapist will wear 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 are also considered appropriate and will be worn by the therapist at the patient's request.
- Patients are required to wear a clean facemask.
 - Patients are requested to bring their own mask. If the patient does not have a mask, the choice of a cloth or single use mask will be provided at the time of their treatment.

Professional Obligations

Liability Insurance

- The Registered Massage Therapist carries professional liability insurance through Wilson M. Beck as provided through the Registered Massage Therapist Association of BC.
- The Registered Massage therapist is following all the health and safety guidelines outlined by the Registered Massage Therapists Association of BC, the College of Massage Therapists of British Columbia 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 14days Prior to Onset of Symptoms

- The patient will contact the therapist and inform them 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.
- 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 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 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.

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.

And the RMT will document the patient's consent in advance and at every treatment.

Flow of events from booking appointment to receiving treatment for patient

- Patient calls office to book appointment or books online
- Patient sent Confirmation on booking with link to protocols
- Within 24 hours of appointment patient completes self assessment tool sent with reminder email, or the BC-assessment tool found here <https://bc.thrive.health/covid19/en>
 - Should patient reply yes to any of the questions they are to notify the clinic and cancel their appointment
- Arrive for appointment on time and wait in vehicle until therapist calls on them to enter the clinic
- Upon arrival in clinic Therapist will wash their hands and hand patient their personal plastic bin with sheets, blanket, towel, and face piece (where applicable) for their treatment and a mask if they do not have their own mask
- Patient will proceed to wash hands either in the restroom using towel from plastic bin, or use hand sanitizer at reception
- Proceed to treatment room where linens from their personal bin will be used to make table or chair
- Following assessment, therapist will leave treatment room allowing patient to get prepared for treatment
- Patient will use plastic bin to store clothes and personal affects.
- After treatment, therapist will leave treatment room and immediately wash their hands
- Patient will indicate when they are dressed after treatment and therapist will re-enter treatment room to discuss follow up of treatment and book appointments if necessary
- Payment will be processed at reception and patient will exit the clinic.
- Linens will be placed in now empty plastic bin in order to be taken to laundry for cleaning
- Therapist will proceed to disinfect all high touch surfaces including but not limited to: door handles, sink, faucet, reception desk, table, chair, etc. and readies the clinic for the next appointment

Please note, this document is a living document intended to be reviewed and edited as the situation and information evolves.

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