



## Re:Hub Massage Therapy Studio Return to Work Protocol 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 practitioners within our clinical setting. Here, we identify the actions that the therapist at Re:Hub Massage Therapy Studio 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 them a copy of these protocols as part of a Covid-19 specific consent form they will be required to sign electronically, prior to arriving at their appointment.
- One day 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.

*o The tool can be found here: <https://bc.thrive.health/covid19/en>*

- The therapist will contact the patient one day before their booked appointment to discuss using the self-assessment tool and to verify that it has been done.
- The therapist will use the BC COVID-19 Self-Assessment tool herself, daily and commits 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:

- o Fever
- o Cough
- o Chills
- o Shortness of breath
- o Sore throat or pain with swallowing
- o Stuffy or runny nose
- o Loss of sense of smell
- o Headache
- o Muscle aches
- o Fatigue
- o 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.

*o 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.

*o 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 required 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 (\$1 donation to BC Children's Hospital) 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

- Only 1 patient/person is permitted in the clinic space at any given time. Patients must arrive unaccompanied.
  - *Minors will not be treated at this time.*
- The therapist is the only other person who will be within the clinic space throughout the duration of the patient's appointment.
- The therapist and the patient will both maintain a space of 2 meters (6 feet) distance between each other in all clinic areas outside the treatment room.
- One chair is provided in the reception area for patient to sit while waiting for their appointment, please do not arrive more than 5 minutes prior to the scheduled appointment time.
  - *Patients are not permitted to socialize in the clinic reception area before or after the treatment.*
- Water and the candy dish have all been removed from the clinic reception area.
- Nothing remains in the clinic space that cannot be disinfected after each touch.
- Appointment times are staggered to reduce the potential of patients crossing paths, and to allow for time in between appointments for enhanced cleaning.
- Patients are asked to arrive on time or no more than 5 minutes early for their appointments.
- The clinic door will be opened for the patient by the therapist and will be locked behind them to prevent anyone else from entering the space during the course of their treatment. The clinic door will be re-opened by the therapist at the end of the appointment for the patient to leave without touching the door knob.

### 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 can and will be sanitized between patients.

## Reception Area / Entry into Clinic Space

- Immediately upon entering the clinic space the patient must use the touchless hand sanitizer dispenser that is placed right next to the entrance
- 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 or shields.
- Hand washing protocols will be posted visibly in the reception area and at sinks.
- Payment occurs in the reception area. Cash will not be accepted at this time. Direct Billing and charging credit card on file are the acceptable payment methods at this moment. If you choose to e-transfer to your therapist it can be arranged as well.

## 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.
  - o Patients will be permitted to open the door for themselves after the treatment to let themselves out of the treatment room.*
  - o Tissue is available inside the treatment room that the patient may use as a barrier when opening the door.*
  - o Hand sanitizer is available within the treatment room; patients will be asked to wash or sanitize their hands after the treatment.*
  - o 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 and treatment room 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 and/or 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.
- Interoral 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/healthcanada/services/drugshhealthproducts/disinfectants/covid19/list.html>
- Common areas will be cleaned and disinfected after each treatment.
- All high touch surfaces will be cleaned and disinfected between patients, regardless of appearances. High touch surfaces include (but are not limited to):
  - o Light switches, door knobs, electronic devices, table surfaces, chairs, stools, etc.*
  - o The treatment table, stool levers, face cradle, oil bottles will be immediately after each treatment.*
  - o No hydrotherapy supplies, thermophores, table warmers will be used.*
- All linens are single use only and will be laundered using high heat, detergent and bleach between each use.
- An Air Purifier has been placed in the clinic and will be utilized in between each patient and/or during the treatment upon the agreement of both the patient and the therapist.
- A disinfected single-use 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 and be disinfected before next treatment.

## Personal Protective Equipment

- The therapist will wear a face mask or other chosen PPE at all times in the clinic.
- The therapist will wear non-latex gloves if/when appropriate.

*o 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.*

*o Hands will be washed prior to putting the gloves on and immediately after removing them.*

*o Gloves are also considered appropriate and will be worn by the therapist at the patient's request.*

- Patients are required to wear a facemask in the clinic at all time.

*o If patients have their own fabric facemask, they are requested to bring it. If they do not have a fabric face mask, a single-use non-medical mask will be provided (\$1 donation to BC Children's Hospital) to them at the time of their treatment.*

*o The RMT may refuse to treat patients who will not 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 masks.*

*o Cloth masks must be laundered following each use. Disposable masks must be discarded following use.*

*o Donning and doffing mask: wash hands with soap and water or sanitize using an alcohol-based hand rub prior to putting on a mask, prior to taking off a mask, and after disposing of a mask in the laundry or garbage (cloth or paper/disposable).*

## Professional Obligations

*“Health professionals are reminded that if they are exhibiting signs of respiratory illness, including cough, runny nose or fever, 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.”*

### Liability Insurance

- RMTs in practice are required by CMTBC’s Bylaws to carry professional liability insurance.

### 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.

*o 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.
- The therapist will immediately self-isolate until Public Health has investigated and provided direction.

### 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.

### 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.*