



COLLEGE & ASSOCIATION OF
Acupuncturists
OF ALBERTA

**GUIDELINES REGARDING
REOPENING OF ACUPUNCTURE CLINICS**

Effective: June 12, 2020

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Introduction

On April 30, 2020, the Alberta Government announced the Relaunch Strategy that will allow some selected businesses to reopen. Acupuncturists will be able to resume in-person services on June 12, 2020, in Stage 2 of the Relaunch Strategy. To ensure safe practice and prevent the spread of COVID-19, the College and Association of Acupuncturists of Alberta (the CAAA) has established the Guidelines in accordance with government orders and directives. Acupuncture clinics must only re-open when appropriate measures are in place. Acupuncturists should note that Stage 2 of the Relaunch Strategy comes into effect on June 12, 2020. As such, acupuncture clinics are not approved for re-opening before that.

As the COVID-19 pandemic is an evolving situation, the Guidelines are subject to changes and will be updated accordingly. Acupuncturists who plan to reopen their clinics must follow the Guidelines approved by Council, in addition to other CAAA regulations, standards and policies. In the event of a discrepancy between the Guidelines and the directives of provincial public health authorities, the directives of the provincial public health authority take precedence.

Overview

The Guidelines covers the entire process from preparation for clinic reopening to completion of treatments, and further to contingency plan. Below is an overview of the Guidelines. Detailed requirements for each step of the process are in subsequent sections.

- Prior to booking patients, Acupuncturists must ensure CMOH directions and the following guidelines are being followed.
- In-person services must only proceed when the anticipated benefits of such services outweigh the risks to the patient and the Acupuncturist.
- Acupuncturists and clinic staff must complete the screening questionnaire for COVID-19 symptoms prior to each clinical shift to ensure they are safe and fit to work.
- Acupuncturists and clinic staff must follow procedures on patient screening prior to in-person services.
- When scheduling patients, space appointment times to minimize patient waiting and the number of people in the clinic at any given time, and allow time for cleaning and disinfection procedures between patients.
- Acupuncturists must wear a surgical/procedure mask continuously, at all times and in all areas of their workplace to safely provide in-person services.
- Any instruments or pieces of equipment used in patient care must be cleaned and disinfected after each use.

- Acupuncturists must carefully consider if they are the most appropriate health professional to address the patient's needs. In-person services are NOT necessary when the patient's condition can benefit from tele-health treatments, either by an Acupuncturist or other healthcare practitioners. Patients must be referred to other healthcare practitioners if it is in their best interest.
- Acupuncturists are required to call Health Link 811 to receive guidance if they are aware of a patient who has visited their clinic in the last 14 days and is now testing (or has tested) positive for COVID-19.

Patient prioritization

It is anticipated that when resuming services Acupuncturists will face difficult decisions regarding which patients to see and the prioritization of service provision. The CAAA recommends the following consideration:

- Acuteness of the patient's condition
- Necessity of services which can only be provided in person
- Duration of patient wait times for care
- Benefit of in-person services relative to the risk to the patient and Acupuncturist

Scheduling

- It is recommended to space appointment times to minimize patient waiting and the number of people in the clinic at any given time.
- Allow adequate time for proper cleaning and disinfection of the treatment area between patients.
- Whenever possible, patients should be asked to wait in their vehicles until it is appropriate to enter the clinic.
- Ensure that the number of patients in the clinic at any given time complies with ongoing directives on group gatherings, and enable physical distance between patients in the clinic.
- Consider treating only one patient at a given time. Treating more than one patient at the same time increases the risk of cross-contamination.
- Acupuncturists must consider the increased risk of cross-contamination when treating more than one patient, appropriate measures must be in place to mitigate the risk of cross-contamination.

Patient Screening and Education

- All patients must complete the screening questionnaire at the time of booking and again in-person before entering the clinic with the following questions:

- Do you have current symptoms of COVID-19, such as cough, fever, shortness of breath, runny nose or sore throat, and less common signs and symptoms? (For a full list of signs and symptoms of COVID-19 see the Alberta Health Services COVID-19 Self-Assessment.)
<https://myhealth.alberta.ca/journey/covid-19/Pages/COVID-Self-Assessment.aspx>
- Have you traveled internationally within the last 14 days?
- Have you had unprotected close contact with individuals who have a confirmed or presumptive diagnosis of COVID-19 (e.g. individuals exposed without appropriate PPE in use).
- A patient who answers “yes” to any of the questions must not make an appointment for an in-person treatment. Advise the patient they should self-isolate and call Health Link 811.
- People who accompany patients, such as parents, caregivers, or companions, must be screened with the same questions as the patient.

Patients (and Companions) Entering the Clinic

- Patients and companions must complete the screening questionnaire before entering the clinic.
- Instruct patients and companions to wash their hands with soap and water or hand sanitizer approved by Health Canada (<https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/drugs-health-products/disinfectants/covid-19/hand-sanitizer.html>) immediately upon entering the clinic.
- Do not bring extra people to the appointment unless absolutely necessary.
- Patients should be directed to the treatment room immediately upon entering the clinic whenever possible.

During Appointment Guidelines for an Acupuncturist in Contact with the Patient

- Acupuncturists must wear a surgical/procedure mask continuously, at all times and in all areas of their workplace to safely provide in-person services.
- The surgical/procedure mask should be immediately changed and safely disposed of whenever it is soiled or wet, whenever the Acupuncturist feels it may have become contaminated, and at the end of the day.
- A new mask must be used for each clinical shift.
- Masks should never be reused.
- Follow procedures on Donning and Doffing of mask according to Alberta Health Service website. <https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/assets/info/ppih/if-ppih-covid-19-hcw-masks.pdf>
- Acupuncturists are recommended to provide and obtain a revised patient consent form while the Guidelines remain in effect. The revised patient consent form should, at a minimum, include the following:
 - Clearly defined COVID-19 prevention protocols and policies.

- Patient should be informed of the risks associated with contraction of COVID-19 despite the implementation of the COVID-19 prevention protocols and policies.
- Allow the disclosure of contact information in the event that a patient who has visited the clinic in the last 14 days and is now testing (or has tested) positive for COVID-19.
- If a patient enters the clinic after they have been screened, but subsequently identified by the Acupuncturist that the patient exhibits signs and symptoms consistent with a respiratory illness, whether COVID-19 is suspected or not, the Acupuncturist must:
 - Provide a new mask for the patient to don.
 - Have the patient complete hand hygiene.
 - Isolate the patient from others in the clinic.
 - Explain the concern that they are symptomatic, discontinue treatment and reschedule the appointment.
 - Advise the patient they should self-isolate and call Health Link 811.
 - Clean and disinfect the practice area immediately.
 - Keep a record of all close contacts of the symptomatic patient and other visitors and staff in the clinic at the time of the visit. This information will be necessary if the symptomatic patient later tests positive for COVID-19.
- Acupuncturists must not attempt a differential diagnosis of patients who present with signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and discontinue treatment immediately.
- Acupuncturists are required to call Health Link 811 to receive guidance if they are aware of a patient who has visited their clinic in the last 14 days and is now testing (or has tested) positive for COVID-19.

After Appointment

- Have the patient pay for the treatment online, if possible. Recommend using the tap-function of a credit or debit card to minimize touching the merchant terminal. Cash transactions should be avoided, if possible, to prevent the spread of infection.
- If possible, use electronic receipts to limit the exchange of papers. If papers are required, avoid sharing pens and office equipment and disinfect each after use.
- Patients must wash their hands with soap and water or hand sanitizer approved by Health Canada prior to processing payments.
- Thoroughly clean and disinfect any surface area the patient may have come in contact with using a Health Canada approved disinfectant at the link below, in addition to regular cleaning and disinfection procedures set out in the CAAA Safety Handbook.
<https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/drugs-health-products/disinfectants/covid-19/list.html>
- Wash hands for a minimum of 20 seconds with soap and water or hand sanitizer approved by Health Canada between each patient.

Staff Health Screening

- Acupuncturists and staff must stay up-to-date with current COVID-19 guidelines and policies from the CAAA, Public Health, and the Government of Alberta.
- Under no circumstances should an Acupuncturist or staff attend work if any of the following applies:
 - Feeling unwell or exhibit any symptoms of fever, cough, runny nose, sore throat, or shortness of breath;
 - Travelled internationally within the last 14 days; or
 - Have been in close contact with confirmed or suspected cases of COVID-19.
- Acupuncturists and staff must follow self-isolation and quarantine requirements when the order (CMOH Order 05-2020) remains in effect.
<https://open.alberta.ca/dataset/005ee2c3-9877-4145-98d0-4306162ac5aa/resource/46aa9494-7454-4dd4-9f74-a250257be1ab/download/health-cmoh-record-fof-decision-cmoh-05-2020.pdf>
- Acupuncturists and staff must complete the screening questionnaire provided below, prior to attending work.

Screening questions for Acupuncturists and staff of the clinic:

1. Do you have any of the following symptoms which are new or worsened if associated with allergies, chronic or pre-existing conditions: fever, cough, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, sore throat, and/or runny nose?
2. Have you returned to Canada from outside the country (including USA) in the past 14 days?

In the past 14 days, at work or elsewhere, while not wearing appropriate personal protective equipment:

3. Did you have close contact* with someone who has a probable** or confirmed case of COVID19?
4. Did you have close contact* with a person who had acute respiratory illness that started within 14 days of their close contact* to someone with a probable** or confirmed case of COVID-19?
5. Did you have close contact* with a person who had acute respiratory illness who returned from travel outside of Canada in the 14 days before they became sick?
6. Did you have a laboratory exposure to biological material (i.e. primary clinical specimens, virus culture isolates) known to contain COVID-19?

If you answer “YES” to any of the above, you are not permitted to attend work at this time and you must self-isolate.

Please refer to the link for the complete screening questionnaire and definition of close contact and probable case. <https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/assets/info/ppih/if-ppih-covid-19-daily-fitness-for-work-screening-questionnaire.pdf>

- Acupuncturists and staff are encouraged to self-monitor by taking their temperatures prior to attending work.

Facility Requirements

- Consider the installation of physical barriers (e.g., plexiglass) at reception desks.
- Any staff who do not work in patient care areas or have direct patient contact are required to mask at all times in the workplace if a physical barrier e.g. plexiglass is not in place or if physical distancing (2 metres) cannot be maintained.
- Seats in waiting areas must be appropriately spaced to maintain a minimum of 2 meters physical distance.
- Clean and disinfect any item that cannot be disposed of between patients, i.e. pens, clipboards, terminals.
- Items that cannot be effectively cleaned and disinfected between use must be removed from the clinic environment (e.g., magazines or toys in waiting areas). This includes but is not limited to chairs and other items with porous fabric upholstery, and treatment beds with torn surfaces or patched with tape. All non-essential items must also be removed.
- Transition as many staff to home offices as possible.
- Post information on the following topics in areas where it is likely to be seen by staff and patients:
 - Physical distancing.
 - Hand hygiene (hand washing and hand sanitizer use.)
 - Help limiting the spread of infection.
 - At a minimum this includes placing them at entrances, in all public/shared washrooms, and treatment areas.
- Increase access to hand sanitizer approved by Health Canada or hand-washing stations.
- Have a clearly defined COVID-19 prevention protocols and policies available to provide to any person with questions.

Hand Hygiene and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

- Acupuncturists must wear a surgical/procedure mask continuously, at all times and in all areas of their workplace to safely provide in-person services.
- The surgical/procedure mask should be immediately changed and safely disposed of whenever it is soiled or wet, whenever the acupuncturist feels it may have become contaminated, and at the end of the day.
- A new mask must be used for each clinical shift.
- Masks should never be reused.
- Follow procedures on Donning and Doffing of mask according to Alberta Health Service website. <https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/assets/info/ppih/if-ppih-covid-19-hcw-masks.pdf>

- Acupuncturists must practice routine hand hygiene consistent with Alberta Health Services 4 Moments of Hand Hygiene (<https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/assets/info/hp/hh/if-hp-hh-moments-1-portrait.pdf>):
 - Before contact with patient/patient’s environment.
 - Before clean/aseptic procedure.
 - After body fluid exposure risk.
 - After contact with patient/patient’s environment.
- Acupuncturists must also avoid touching their face and practice respiratory etiquette by coughing or sneezing into their elbow or covering coughs and sneezes with a facial tissue and then disposing of the tissue immediately.
- Patients should be asked to complete hand hygiene using soap and water or hand sanitizer. At the following times:
 - Upon arrival at the practice setting.
 - Prior to processing payment.
 - Prior to departure from the practice.

Environmental Cleaning and Disinfection

Effective cleaning and disinfection are essential to prevent the spread of COVID-19, which is transmitted primarily through contact with respiratory droplets, or from contact with contaminated surfaces.

Cleaning refers to the removal of visible soil. Cleaning does not kill germs but is highly effective at removing them from a surface. Disinfecting refers to using a chemical to kill germs on a surface. Disinfecting is only effective after surfaces have been cleaned.

Use a “wipe-twice” method to clean and disinfect. Wipe surfaces with a cleaning agent to clean off soil and wipe again with a disinfectant.

Health Canada has approved several hard-surface disinfectants for use against COVID-19. Use these lists to look up the DIN number of the product you are using or to find an approved product. Make sure to follow instructions on the product label to disinfect effectively.

Disinfectants: <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/drugs-health-products/disinfectants/covid-19/list.html>

The frequency of cleaning and disinfection is dependent on the nature of use/contact of the surface/item in question:

- Patient care/patient contact items must be cleaned and disinfected between each patient/use. Examples of patient contact items include but are not limited to:
 - treatment tables, all contact surfaces, and the entire headpiece and hand rests
 - therapeutic tools and devices (e.g. cupping tools and acupressure tools)

- pin pads used to process payment, and reception area
- High touched areas must be cleaned and disinfected a minimum of twice daily or whenever visibly soiled. Examples include but are not limited to:
 - light switches, doorknobs, toilets, taps, handrails, counter tops, touch screens/mobile devices, phones and keyboards
 - Clipboards used by patients must be disinfected after each patient encounter.
 - Pens/pencils used by patients must be disinfected after each patient use or be single-use only.
- Any cloth items, such as towels, sheets, headrest coverings, etc., that are used in the clinic must be laundered in hot water (above 60°C) with regular laundry soap before being dried and used again. Staff that is handling these items should be gloved for both dirty and clean laundry processing. Staff must always use new gloves when handling clean laundry.

Record Keeping

Clear documentation records are essential to ensure the successful implementation of COVID-19 prevention protocols and policies. It is recommended that Acupuncturists include the following information in the patient files:

- Screening questions and records for symptoms of COVID-19
- People who accompany patients, such as parents, caregivers or companions, must be screened with the same questions as the patient.
- Revised patient consent form
- Actual appointment date and time (arrival and departure)
- Up to date address and phone number of the patient and companions
- Specific treatment room if multiple rooms are used

In addition, separate files must be kept for the following information:

- Acupuncturists' and staff's daily health screening records
<https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/assets/info/ppih/if-ppih-covid-19-daily-fitness-for-work-screening-questionnaire.pdf>
- Daily cleaning and disinfection records
- A registry of all people entering the clinic, include the Acupuncturists, staff, people in the clinic aside from patients (e.g. repair people, guardians accompanying a patient, etc.). At a minimum, the following information should be included:
 - Name
 - Phone number
 - Date
 - Arrival time
 - Departure time

Additional information for staff:

- Address
- Roles and positions of persons working at the practice.

Resources

Screening

- Alberta Health Services COVID-19 Self-Assessment
<https://myhealth.alberta.ca/journey/covid-19/Pages/COVID-Self-Assessment.aspx>
- Staff Screening Checklist
<https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/assets/info/ppih/if-ppih-covid-19-daily-fitness-for-work-screening-questionnaire.pdf>

Cleaning and disinfection

- Hand sanitizer approved by Health Canada
<https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/drugs-health-products/disinfectants/covid-19/hand-sanitizer.html>
- Hard-surface disinfectant approved by Health Canada
<https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/drugs-health-products/disinfectants/covid-19/list.html>
- Public Health Guidelines for Environmental Cleaning of Public Facilities during Respiratory Illnesses in the Community
<https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/assets/info/ppih/if-ppih-covid-19-environmental-cleaning-public-facilities.pdf>

PPE

- Alberta Health Services Guidelines for Continuous Masking in Healthcare settings
<https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/assets/info/ppih/if-ppih-covid-19-ppe-continuous-use-guidance-masking.pdf>
- PPE Online Module
[https://ahamms01.https.internapcdn.net/ahamms01/Content/AHS_Website/modules/pcm/pcm-pppe-covid/story.html](https://ahamms01.https.internapcdn.net/ahamms01/Content/AHS_Website/modules/ipc/pcm-pppe-covid/story.html)
- Donning and Doffing of PPE
<https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/info/Page6422.aspx>
- Frequently Asked Questions about PPE
<https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/assets/info/ppih/if-ppih-covid-19-ppe-faq.pdf>
- How to Wear a Mask
<https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/assets/info/ppih/if-ppih-covid-19-hcw-masks.pdf>
- PPE Procurement Websites
 - Rapid Response Platform Canada: <https://www.rrpcanada.org/#/>

- ATB Nexus: <https://nexus.atb.com/products/list/>

Hand Hygiene

- Alberta Health Services 4 Moments of Hand Hygiene
<https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/assets/info/hp/hh/if-hp-hh-moments-1-portrait.pdf>
- How to Use Alcohol-based Hand Rub
<https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/assets/healthinfo/ipc/if-hp-flu-hand-rub-how-to.pdf>
- How to Hand Wash
<https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/assets/healthinfo/ipc/if-hp-ipc-flu-handwash-how-to.pdf>

Government of Alberta Guidelines

- Alberta Health Service Interim Infection Prevention and Control Recommendations for COVID-19
<https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/assets/healthinfo/ipc/hi-ipc-emerging-issues-ncov.pdf>
- Alberta Health Services Routine Practices in Community-Based Services
<https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/assets/healthinfo/ipc/hi-ipc-routine-practices-info-community.pdf>
- Workplace Guidance for Business Owners
<https://www.alberta.ca/assets/documents/covid-19-workplace-guidance-for-business-owners.pdf>
- Government of Alberta: Temporary Workplace Rule Changes
<https://www.alberta.ca/temporary-workplace-rule-changes.aspx>
- Guidance for reopening
<https://www.alberta.ca/biz-connect.aspx>