



CAA GUIDELINE: PRACTICING DURING COVID-19

Effective July 20, 2021

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Jan 6, 2022	Mandatory masking effective December 10, 2021 per CMOH Order 52-2021.

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Overview

Requirements

Acupuncturists **must**:

- follow the directions provided by the CMOH, the CAA, and their local municipal authorities.
- allow adequate time for proper cleaning and disinfection of the treatment area between patients.
- complete patient screening at the time of booking and prior to their admittance to the practice environment.
- complete staff screening prior to attending work.
- refrain from providing care to a patient with symptoms of COVID-19.
- practice routine hand hygiene.
- maintain rigor in cleaning and disinfecting.
- wear a surgical/procedure mask continuously, at all times and in all areas of their workplace.

Recommendations

Acupuncturists are **strongly recommended** to:

- utilize eye protection as an additional layer of protection for all patient interactions within two metres.

Introduction

As Alberta enters Stage 3 of Open for Summer and provincial wide restrictions of COVID-19 are lifted, the regulatory colleges are expected to develop relevant infection prevention and control polices to guide their members with the intent to protect the public. As such, the College of Acupuncturists of Alberta (the CAA) is closely monitoring the effect of COVID-19 and continues to review and update our current guidelines as needed.

COVID-19 continues to be an evolving situation, acupuncturists are encouraged to monitor the following websites regularly for the most up-to-date information:

- [Alberta Government - COVID-19 orders and legislation](#)
- [Alberta Government – Public health measures in effect](#)
- [College of Acupuncturists of Alberta](#)

In addition, acupuncturists should also monitor their municipal website regularly for information on municipal public health measures.

Scheduling

Acupuncturists **must**:

- allow adequate time for proper cleaning and disinfection of the treatment area between patients.
- understand the increased risk of cross-contamination when treating more than one patient at a time, appropriate measures must be in place to mitigate the risk of cross-contamination.

Patient Screening

Acupuncturists **must**:

- complete patient screening at the time of booking and prior to their admittance to the practice environment. Acupuncturists encouraged to utilize the [Alberta Health Services COVID-19 Self-Assessment](#) for screening.
- refrain from providing care to a patient with symptoms of COVID-19. An individual with even mild symptoms of COVID-19 is legally required to [self-isolate](#), regardless of their vaccination status.

Staff Health Screening

Acupuncturists and staff **must**:

- complete staff screening prior to attending work. Acupuncturists are encouraged to utilize the [Alberta Health Services COVID-19 Self-Assessment](#) for screening.

Hand Hygiene

Acupuncturists **must**:

- practice routine hand hygiene consistent with [Alberta Health Services 4 Moments of Hand Hygiene](#):
 - Before contact with patient/patient's environment.
 - Before clean/aseptic procedure.
 - After body fluid exposure risk.
 - After contact with patient/patient's environment.
- 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.
- provide access to hand sanitizers or hand-washing stations for patients to complete hand hygiene at the following times:
 - Upon arrival at the practice setting
 - Before and after use of shared equipment
 - Prior to departure from the practice

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Acupuncturists **must**:

- wear a surgical/procedure mask continuously, at all times and in all areas of their workplace.

Acupuncturists are **strongly recommended** to:

- utilize eye protection as an additional layer of protection for all patient interactions within two metres.

Patient Use of Mask

Acupuncturists should carefully consider the implications of refusing to provide care to a patient who declines to wear a mask. Acupuncturists are recommended to adopt the guidance of the College of Physician and Surgeons of Alberta (CPSA) when caring for patients who are not masked: In the absence of a provincial or municipal mask mandate, acupuncturists and clinic staff can recommend mask use to patients while in the clinic. Acupuncturists can take other proven steps to reduce risk, such as:

- Limiting walk-ins by asking patients to make appointments (in-person or virtual) whenever possible
- Using transparent barriers
- Maintaining physical distancing in waiting rooms and throughout the care space
- Limiting the time spent interacting with an unmasked patient
- Performing pre-screening and point-of-care risk assessments
- Enhancing hand hygiene and environmental cleaning

- Having clinic staff wear masks and other PPE
- Ensuring staff who are sick stay home
- Designating clinic space and specific times for unmasked patient assessments

Acupuncturists are also encouraged to review the “[Mask-wearing and human rights in Alberta](#)” section on the Alberta Human Rights Commission website.

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.

Non-essential items and items that cannot be effectively cleaned and disinfected **must be removed** in the clinic environment.

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.

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

Acupuncturists must keep records of COVID-19 screening in patient files.

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

- Acupuncturists' and staff's daily health screening records
- Daily cleaning and disinfection records

Additional Considerations

Additional measures may be appropriate to reduce the spread of COVID-19 depending on the practice setting or situation. Acupuncturists are encouraged to consider implementing the following measures:

- Install physical barriers (e.g., plexiglass) as appropriate.
- Enable physical distancing as appropriate.
- Post information about hand hygiene in areas where it is likely to be seen by staff and patients.
- Space appointment times to minimize patient waiting and the number of people in the clinic at any given time.
- Implement contact tracing.
- Accept online payments or use the tap-function of a credit or debit card to minimize touching the merchant terminal.
- Use electronic receipts to limit the exchange of papers.

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/ipc/pc-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>

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>