



# **CAA GUIDELINE: PRACTICING DURING COVID-19**

**Effective July 20, 2021**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Revision</b>
Jan 6, 2022	Mandatory masking effective December 10, 2021 per CMOH Order 52-2021.
Mar 1, 2022	Provincial mask mandate lifted effective February 28, 2022 at 11:59 p.m. per CMOH Order 09-2022.
Jun 15, 2022	Mandatory COVID-19 restrictions lifted effective June 14, 2022 at 11:59 p.m. per CMOH Order 10-2022.

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## Overview

### *Recommendations*

Acupuncturists are **strongly recommended** to:

- wear a well-fitted medical/surgical mask continuously, at all times and in all areas of their workplace.
- utilize eye protection as an additional layer of protection for all patient interactions within two metres.

Acupuncturists are **recommended** to:

- complete patient screening at the time of booking and prior to their admittance to the practice environment.
- complete self and 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.

## **Introduction**

On June 14, Alberta enters Step 3 of the plan to ease public measures and all mandatory public health restrictions were lifted. As such, the recommendations in this document are no longer mandatory. That said, registrants are still required to assess risks in their practice and implement appropriate infection prevention and control measures. The recommendations in this document remain valuable and registrants are encouraged to use this document as a guide for actions and policies to consider.

## **Scheduling**

Acupuncturists are recommended to:

- 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 are recommended to:

- 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 recommended to [self-isolate](#).

## **Staff Health Screening**

Acupuncturists and staff are recommended to:

- 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 are recommended to:

- 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 are **strongly recommended** to:

- wear a well-fitted medical/surgical mask continuously, at all times and in all areas of their workplace.
- utilize eye protection as an additional layer of protection for all patient interactions within two metres.

### **Patient Use of Mask**

Registrants should carefully consider the implications of refusing to provide care to a patient who declines to wear a mask. The CAA Code of Professional Conduct states that the registrants shall not discriminate against, refuse to advise or provide treatment to patients, and hence access to care should not be denied on the basis of a protected ground or health status, including health conditions that may preclude the use of a mask. Registrants must also consider the health and safety of everyone that enters the practice environment.

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

## **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 should 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 should 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 should 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 should 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 should always use new gloves when handling clean laundry.

## **Record Keeping**

Acupuncturists should keep records of COVID-19 screening.

In addition, separate files should 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>

### *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/pcmpe-covid/story.html](https://ahamms01.https.internapcdn.net/ahamms01/Content/AHS_Website/modules/ipc/pcmpe-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/pcmpe/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>