

Guidelines for resuming private sector in face-to-face physiotherapy intervention

In order to allow physiotherapy professionals in private clinics throughout Newfoundland to prepare for a return to in-clinic treatment at Alert Level 3, the Newfoundland and Labrador College of Physiotherapists (NLCP) has developed guidelines detailing safety processes and procedures. These guidelines aim to protect patients, physiotherapy professionals and those around them. The suggestions presented will be adapted as the situation in Newfoundland evolves.

Current situation

Physiotherapy has an essential role in the provision of health care services; but only emergent or urgent cases that cannot benefit from tele-rehabilitation can be seen face-to-face in private clinics.

The NLCP maintains this position until the next government announcement that will confirm a change in the Alert Level as posted on the government website:

<https://www.gov.nl.ca/covid-19/alert-system/alert-level-5/>

In the meantime, we will continue to encourage the use of tele-rehabilitation for suitable cases.

Public environment

Professionals practicing in a public environment must follow the protocols established within their establishments.

Private Clinic Guidelines

Before the clinic consultation

The physiotherapist or the client should not come to the clinic if they meet any of the following criteria:

- If they have any of the following signs or symptoms: fever, cough, difficulty breathing, diarrhea, loss of taste or smell.
- If they have returned from a trip outside the country in less than 14 days.
- If they had a positive COVID-19 test less than a month ago or if he is awaiting the result of a test.
- If they have been in close contact with a confirmed or probable case of COVID-19 in the past 14 days.

Physiotherapists should document information obtained during screening in your client's file.

Source: <https://oppq.qc.ca/covid-19/ressources-cliniques/procedure-reprise-physiotherapie-presentiel/>
April 20, 2020

Clinic consultation

If a clinic presence is required for any reason including: assessment, reassessment, emergency or care immediately required, special techniques, etc., please observe the following precautions:

- Limit the presence of a client to the strict minimum.
- Adopt rules for physical distance between clients and staff (excluding the therapist): 2 meters (6 feet) apart.
- Post reminders of measures to reduce the spread of COVID-19.
- Follow the steps detailed below and communicate these guidelines to the client before they show up for the appointment.

Patient reception

Dressed in a procedural mask the receptionist must:

1. Make sure that the arrival time of the customers does not bring people together. The arrival of patients should be timed appropriately.
2. Ask the client, upon arrival, to wash their hands for at least 20 seconds with an alcohol-based disinfectant or with water and soap;
3. Direct the client immediately to the treatment area to prevent the client from moving from one place to another.

During the consultation

The physiotherapist must:

1. Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds with an alcohol-based disinfectant or with soap and water before each consultation (wearing gloves is also an option).
2. Follow the following instructions for personal protective equipment (PPE):
 - Always wear a procedural mask when carrying out interventions.
 - Use gloves, glasses (visor), a smock or a long-sleeved lab coat in addition to the mask if there is a risk of exposure to biological fluids during the procedure.
 - Follow the rules to apply PPE properly.

After the consultation

The physiotherapist must:

1. Instruct the patient to wash their hands for at least 20 seconds with an alcohol-based disinfectant or with soap and water before departure.
2. Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds with an alcohol-based disinfectant or with water. If you have chosen to wear gloves, change them after each consultation and then wash your hands.
3. If soiled, change their procedure mask, gown or lab coat after the consultation. Clean glasses if required.
4. Follow PPE withdrawal instructions
5. Ensure that the instruments in the assessment room are cleaned with a surface disinfectant before and after each consultation.

Other recommendations

- Ensure that other personnel coming in contact with a client wear a procedural mask, gloves, an isolation gown and that they properly put on and take off their PPE.
- If possible, make protective glasses or visors available to members of your staff who wish to take advantage of them.
- Clean and disinfect more frequently during opening hours and at the end of the day
- Make disinfectant(hand sanitizer) pumps available, especially at reception and in all places that require coming into contact with objects.
- Promote contactless payment.
- Ensure that employees receive training on hygiene measures to be applied during a pandemic.

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