

## **COVID Update – August 10, 2021**

Effective at 1201hrs this am the Special Measures mandate on masks has been amended. Residents are no longer required to wear a mask in public indoor spaces.

The best defense against a possible 4<sup>th</sup> wave as it has come to be described and the rise of the rapid spreading Delta variant is a two dose vaccination. In NL only 62% of the population has had two doses. And 85% is needed to ensure an effective barrier. Consequently, the use of a mask is still strongly recommended by the CMOH.

<https://www.gov.nl.ca/covid-19/files/Declaration-of-Public-Health-Emergency-August-10-2021-Extension-34.pdf>

Key points from the College perspective for Physiotherapists:

1. Follow GovNL Level 2 Guidelines still applicable <https://www.gov.nl.ca/covid-19/>
2. Masks are required during assessment and treatment by both patient and physiotherapist. The rationale for this requirement is that physiotherapists are not able to physically distance and do have prolonged exposure to client's personal space.
3. Appropriate screening should continue.
4. Physical distancing needed in wait room and exercise rooms.
5. Gradual increase in patient volume dependent on distancing.
6. Patient scheduling to allow for cleaning and disinfecting.
7. Use of face shield at physiotherapists discretion..
8. Utilize additional PPE protection for specific TMJ treatment
9. Individual private clinics can insist on the use of masks in waiting rooms.

Dr. Fitzgerald emphasized the importance of vaccinations but since they can not be mandated, we have to assume some individuals are coming to clinics who have not had a vaccination themselves. This may put Health Care Professionals and other patients at risk.