



We're back! But things are a little different...

Dear valued patients,

We are so excited to be part of your healthcare again!

Upon reopening The Healing Oak, the following procedures will be implemented in order for us to provide much needed massage therapy while maintaining safe practices and minimizing the risk of exposure to COVID-19.

It's a lot of information, but we encourage you to read through it and contact us if you have any questions or concerns. It is important to understand the risks associated with receiving treatment at this time, and what we can and will do to decrease those risks.

We look forward to providing you with a safe and healing environment!

Best,

The Healing Oak Team

Plan for Return to Clinical Practice

New Clinic Procedures in Respect to COVID-19

This plan was developed with the goal of reducing the risk of exposure to COVID-19 for both patients and therapists within our clinical setting. Here, we identify the actions that the therapists at The Healing Oak Registered Massage Therapy commit to, and that all visiting patients must commit to, in order to resume massage therapy services. These protocols and procedures will be updated as needed.

“Coronavirus is transmitted via liquid droplets when a person coughs or sneezes. The virus can enter through these droplets through the eyes, nose or throat if you are in close contact.

The virus is not known to be airborne (e.g. transmitted through the particles floating in the air) and it is not something that comes in through the skin.

It can be spread by touch if a person has used their hands to cover their mouth or nose when they cough. That’s why we recommend you cough or sneeze into your arm and wash your hands regularly.”

Source: <http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19/about-covid-19/how-it-spreads>

The overall aim of these protocols is to reduce potential COVID-19 transmission by:

- Required ongoing self-assessment for signs of COVID-19 related illness in both the patient and the therapist.
- Reducing all physical, non-treatment related interactions amongst all people within the practice environment.
- Hand hygiene requirements.
- Avoiding face touching.
- Enhanced cleaning protocols.
- Appropriate use of personal protective equipment (PPE).
- Meeting professional obligations, particularly related to informed consent and liability insurance.

Self-Assessment for Symptoms of COVID-19: For Patients & Therapists

Pre-Screening / Prior to Arrival

- At the time of booking an initial appointment upon reopening, we ask that patients complete and electronically sign a new intake form on our new booking system.
- 36 hours prior to an appointment, patients will receive an online COVID-19 screening survey via email. Patients are **required** to complete this document up to 24 hours prior to their appointment. On your initial appointment, your therapist will contact you via text/email/phone the day before your appointment to discuss any questions or concerns that you or your therapist may have. If the screening survey is not completed the day before your appointment, the appointment will be cancelled.
- Upon arrival at the clinic, patients will be asked to complete the COVID-19 screening survey again, along with consent to treatment. **This final COVID-19 Patient Screening and Consent Form will need to be signed by the patient, in order to proceed with treatment.**
- In the event of same day booking or when an email is not possible, mandatory screening will be done over the phone prior to the final screening and written consent in person.
- All therapists have committed to using the BC COVID-19 Self-Assessment tool daily, and to cancel all appointments if any symptoms appear. The tool can be found here: <https://bc.thrive.health/covid19/en>
- Symptoms of COVID-19 are similar to other respiratory illnesses and seasonal allergies. An appointment must be cancelled immediately if either the patient or the therapist presents with even mild symptoms that may be signs of COVID-19, including:
 - Fever
 - Cough
 - Chills
 - Shortness of breath
 - Sore throat or pain with swallowing
 - Stuffy or runny nose
 - Loss of sense of smell
 - Headache
 - Muscle aches
 - Fatigue
 - Loss of appetite
- COVID-19 Symptoms may range from mild to severe. **Patients are required to cancel appointments if they experience what they determine to be ‘just the sniffles,’ ‘seasonal allergies’ or ‘just feeling under the weather,’ on the day of their appointment.**

- Patients must confirm that they have not been in contact with anyone displaying illness, or signs and symptoms of COVID-19 within 14 days prior to their treatment.
 - **In special cases of health care workers, please visit this link for a more detailed self-screening assessment:** <http://www.bccdc.ca/health-professionals/clinical-resources/covid-19-care/testing-and-case-management-for-healthcare-workers>
- Patients must confirm that they have not travelled outside of BC within 14 days prior to treatment.
- As part of the consent form, patients must commit to understanding that while we've taken all possible measures to minimize risk of viral transmission, the nature of massage therapy means that physical distancing is not possible within the treatment room.
- Patients with higher risk profiles and/or weakened immune systems should consider alternatives for care and postpone treatment.
- The therapist and patient must agree that the therapeutic benefit of massage therapy outweighs any potential consequence of treatment, including the possibility of viral transmission.
- Patients who develop even mild illness or symptoms must cancel booked appointments, even without notice.
 - They will not be charged a late cancellation fee if they cancel due to illness. No shows, or cancelled appointments within 1 hour prior to treatment time will be charged a cancellation fee (in the full amount of treatment).

Upon Arrival

- As per CPHO Theresa Tam, all Canadians should wear masks in public situations where physical distancing is not possible. Given this information, masks must be worn at all times within the clinic space. Patients are encouraged to bring their own mask and wear it when they arrive. If the patient does not have a mask, a single-use disposable mask can be purchased for \$2. If you wish to purchase a mask, please notify your therapist prior to arrival. You will be asked to put the mask on before entering the clinic space.
- The treatment will be cancelled immediately if the patient does not meet the pre-screening criteria upon physical presentation at the clinic.

Physical Distancing

Reception Area / Entry into Clinic Space

- Patients are asked to arrive on time – not early or late for appointments.
- We will be using one door for entering the clinic. For entry, please use the side entrance next to covered parking. When leaving the clinic, your therapist will lead you out.

- Patients are asked to arrive unaccompanied. With this in consideration, minors will not be treated at this time.
- It is required that patients wait outside the clinic door (in the lobby/hallway of the building) or in their vehicles until their treatment time, at which point their therapist will come to let them in.
- The clinic door will be opened for the patient by the therapist and will be locked behind them.
- The clinic door will be re-opened by the therapist at the end of the appointment for the patient to leave without touching the doorknob.
- While in the clinic, please be aware that other treatments are in progress and to keep your voice low for your privacy and the comfort of others.
- Therapists and patients will maintain a space of 2 meters (6 feet) distance between each other in all clinic areas that are outside the treatment room.
- Patients are not permitted to lounge in the clinic reception area before or after their treatment.
- The water jug has been removed from the clinic reception area. We encourage patients to bring their own water bottles. If necessary, the therapist can provide water in a disposable cup.
- Nothing remains in the clinic space that cannot be disinfected after each touch.
- Appointment times are scheduled as best as possible to reduce the potential of multiple patients crossing paths, and to allow for time in-between treatments for enhanced cleaning.
- Caseloads will be smaller than pre-pandemic levels. Care will be prioritized on the basis of need.

Restroom for Patient Use

- We strongly encourage patients to use the restroom at home or at work before arriving to the clinic.
- There are public restrooms available on the second floor of the building, which are accessible by stairs or elevator. They are cleaned daily.
- If completely necessary, please notify your therapist of clinic restroom use.
- The restroom within the clinic will be cleaned and sanitized at least 3 times per day.

Hand Hygiene

Reception Area / Entry into Clinic Space

- Immediately upon entering the clinic space, patients must use the hand sanitizer dispenser to clean their hands.

- The therapist will wash hands thoroughly for at least 20 seconds before and after each appointment, before and after disinfecting spaces, before donning gloves and after taking gloves off, before and after doing laundry, and before donning or doffing other PPE like face masks or safety glasses.
- Hand washing protocols will be posted visibly in the reception area and at sinks.
- Payment occurs in the treatment room. We encourage email transfer but will accept cards at this time. We can store credit card information for future use, if the patient agrees. All devices will be sanitized after every use. Cash is highly discouraged at this time.
- Receipts must be emailed to the patient, not printed.

In the Treatment Room

- It is not possible to maintain physical distancing while in the treatment room.
- The final self-assessment survey will be completed when the patient and therapist enter the treatment room. Patients will be required to sign a consent form and waiver in order to proceed with treatment. Pens/Stylus/IPad/Laptop will be sanitized after every appointment.
- Patients will be asked to keep all personal belongings in a designated patient area within the treatment room, which will be sanitized between appointments.
- Patients will be asked to remove from the clinic everything that they bring with them.
- We encourage patients to bring as little as possible to the clinic, including jewellery/accessories.
- The therapist will open the door to the treatment room and allow the patient to enter. The therapist will open/close the door before, during, and after the treatment as required – reducing the need for the patient to touch the door. Patients may use a tissue to open the treatment room door to allow the therapist back in for payment and rebooking.
 - When the treatment has ended, the therapist will use either a towel or tissue on the doorknob to exit the room and will thoroughly wash her hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
 - Treatments will be shortened by 5-10 minutes to account for extra cleaning protocols/administrative time.
 - When the patient is dressed and ready, the therapist will re-enter the room to take care of payment and re-booking.
 - Hand sanitizer is available within the treatment room; patients will be asked to sanitize their hands immediately after the treatment.
 - The door and doorknobs will be disinfected between each patient.

Avoid Face Touching

- COVID-19 can be transmitted by touch if droplets are on the hand when it touches the face, as it can transfer those infected droplets to the mouth, nose or eyes.
- Tissues will be available throughout the clinic: in the reception area, treatment rooms and washroom in order that patients and therapists may use tissue to address an itch and/or touch the face for any other reason.
- The therapist will wear a mask at all times.
- Patients are required to wear face masks that cover both the nose and mouth at all times within the clinic space.
- Intraoral and external TMJ treatments will not be conducted at this time.
- Musculature of the face will not be palpated or treated at this time.

Enhanced Cleaning

- All surfaces will be cleaned and disinfected with a Canada Health Approved for use against COVID-19 disinfectant as listed here: <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/drugs-health-products/disinfectants/covid-19/list.html>
- Common areas will be cleaned and disinfected at least 3 times a day, including the restroom.
- All high touch surfaces will be cleaned and disinfected between patients. High touch surfaces include (but are not limited to):
 - Light switches, chairs, doorknobs, electronic devices, table surfaces, faucets, etc.
 - Everything within the treatment room will be disinfected after each treatment. This includes the treatment table, table legs, table levers, face cradle, lotion bottles, stools, chairs, desks, shelves, and floors.
- All hydrotherapy supplies that cannot be completely sanitized after each use will not be used. This includes thermophores/heating pads.
- A Cleaning and Disinfecting log will be displayed on the back of each treatment room door.
- All linens, including blankets and pillowcases, are single use only and will be laundered using high heat, detergent, and bleach after each use.
- All pillows and bolsters have vinyl covers, which will be disinfected after each use.

Personal Protective Equipment

- Therapists will wear either a cloth or disposable face mask at all times when working with a patient.

- Safety glasses will be on hand at the clinic and will be worn by the therapist at the patient's request.
- Therapists will wear non-latex gloves if/when appropriate.
 - Gloves may be appropriate when over-use of cleaning and/or chemicals causes skin irritation, or when the therapist's hands or skin of the hands are otherwise injured.
 - Hands will be washed prior to putting the gloves on and immediately after removing them.
 - Gloves are also considered appropriate and will be worn by the therapist at the patient's request.
- Patients are required to wear a clean face mask in the clinic at all times.
 - If patients have their own face mask, they are requested to clean it prior to use, and to arrive at the clinic wearing it.
 - If patients do not have a face mask, a single-use non-medical disposable mask can be provided for \$2 at the time of their treatment.

Professional Obligations

Liability Insurance

- Each therapist carries her own professional liability insurance.
- All therapists are following all the health and safety guidelines outlined by the College of Massage Therapists of British Columbia, the Registered Massage Therapists Association of BC, and the Provincial Health Officer. They are taking all reasonable precautions to clean and disinfect the clinic and all the surfaces within the treatment room.
- No guarantees have been made by the therapist, that the patient may not come in contact with COVID-19 at or during an appointment.

In the Event That a Patient Tests Positive for COVID-19 Having Been to a Massage Therapy Appointment within the 14-days Prior to Onset of Symptoms

- The patient will contact the therapist and inform her of positive test results and possible transmission of the virus immediately.
- The therapist will immediately self-isolate.
- The therapist will call public health at 8-1-1 to report the possible transmission and act on direction of Provincial Health.

In the Event That a Patient Alleges they Caught COVID-19 from the Therapist

- The therapist will immediately call public health at 8-1-1 to report the alleged transmission, providing both the name of the RMT and **the name and contact details of the patient**.
 - The patient must agree to the release of this information under these circumstances in order to receive treatment.
- All massage therapy appointments will be cancelled, and the therapist will cease to provide services until Public Health has investigated and provided direction.
- The therapist will immediately self-isolate until Public Health has investigated and provided direction.

In the Event That the Therapist Contracts COVID-19 or Displays Symptoms of COVID-19

- The therapist will immediately self-isolate.
- The therapist will call public health at 8-1-1 to report the symptoms and request access to COVID-19 testing.
 - If testing is granted:
 - All massage therapy appointments will be cancelled, and the therapist will cease to provide services until test results are returned negative.
 - If testing proves positive the therapist will follow Public Health directives in informing patients treated over the previous 14 days about potential transmission.
 - If testing is not granted:
 - All massage therapy appointments will be cancelled, and the therapist will cease to provide services for a minimum of 10-days beyond the onset of symptoms, and/or until symptoms cease.

In the Event That the Therapist Comes into Close Contact with Someone Showing Signs of Illness or Tests Positive for COVID-19

- The therapist will immediately self-isolate.
- All massage therapy appointments will be cancelled, and the therapist will cease to provide services until:
 - The close contact has been tested for COVID-19 and the results proved negative and the therapist is well, or
 - After self-isolating for 14 days and having no symptoms of fever develop, or
 - Being cleared by a public health official.

Asymptomatic Spreaders

- Asymptomatic transmission of the COVID-19 is an unavoidable risk of practice until we've acquired herd immunity, there is an effective treatment, or vaccine against COVID-19.
- We have put into place protocols to help mitigate that risk as outlined in the preceding documentation.
- No guarantees have been made by the therapists at The Healing Oak that the patient may not come in contact with COVID-19 at or during an appointment.

Informed Consent

In the current environment of COVID-19 risk, informed consent requires that the patient be informed and understands that:

- Any massage therapy treatment involves some risk of COVID-19 transmission;
- The therapist is following protocol to help reduce or mitigate risk where possible, but that risk cannot be reduced to zero;
- The patient consents to the treatment despite some risk;
- And the RMT will document the patient's consent in advance and at every treatment.