

COVID-19 REOPENING PLAN FOR DENTAL CLINICS PHASE 3 COMPREHENSIVE CARE

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These guidelines are current as of March 7, 2022.

Pursuant to the announcement of then Premier Stephen McNeil on May 27, 2020, effective **June 19, 2020**, all dental offices in Nova Scotia were authorized to provide Phase 3 <u>comprehensive</u> (emergent, urgent and non-urgent) dental treatment in their offices while following the provisions outlined in this document. Each treatment facility is required to update their own site-specific work plan based on the changes contained within this document.

The following information is for registrants to use as a resource, in addition to appropriate clinical judgment, when making decisions to provide dental treatment. This is a fluid document that will be updated/modified as new evidence-based information becomes available.

IMPORTANT: Registrants and dental practices are free to maintain additional measures as they deem appropriate according to their own clinical judgement.

1.0 Dental Procedures

1.1 Aerosol Generating Procedures and Non-Aerosol Generating Procedures

Aerosol generating procedures (AGPs) are procedures which can generate aerosols that consist of small droplet nuclei in high concentration and present a risk for airborne transmission of pathogens that would not otherwise be spread by the airborne route (e.g. Coronavirus, influenza). These types of procedures are thought to be associated with a higher risk of disease transmission in COVID-19 positive patients. Additional precautions, as outlined in this document, must be taken when performing AGPs. Examples of AGPs in dentistry would include the use of (a/an):

- three-way air-water syringe;
- ultrasonic and sonic devices;
- high speed handpiece;
- slow speed handpiece in the presence of water/saliva;
- lasers;
- micro-abrasion; or
- air polishers.

Non-aerosol generating procedures (NAGPs) are procedures with a lower likelihood of generating aerosols.

1.2 Additional Considerations for All Procedures

- Follow the proper donning and doffing of PPE (see Appendix A);
- Consider using pre-procedural mouth rinses (PPMRs).

When possible:

- Use rubber dam isolation and/or other isolation techniques;
- Use high-volume suction to limit aerosols;
- Utilize four-handed dentistry.

2.0 Before the Appointment

- Promote physical distancing between patients;
- Remove all magazines/toys etc. from waiting area to prevent contamination;
- Arrange seating in waiting room to allow for physical distancing of 2 meters; and
- Patients must wear a non-medical mask to their appointment or be provided with a mask (nonmedical or surgical) when they arrive.

Pre-Screening

Patients **must** be pre-screened via remote communications, at a minimum, prior to entering the clinic on the day of the appointment. This is important to protect both patients and DHCPs from possible virus transmission. Pre-screening questions must include COVID-19 symptoms, isolation requirements, underlying medical risk factors, and the nature of the chief complaint.

2.1 COVID-19 Symptoms

In the past 48 hours have you had, or are you currently experiencing:

- i. Either of the following:
 - A fever (greater than 38°C) or fever like symptoms: chills or sweats; or
 - A new or worsening cough.

OR

- ii. Two or more of the following symptoms (new or worsening):
 - Sore throat
 - Runny nose/nasal congestion
 - Headache
 - Shortness of breath.

2.2 Symptoms present or Patient is required to isolate for any reason

This is indicated by a patient having:

• A fever (greater than 38°C) or fever like symptoms: chills or sweats OR a new or worsening cough OR two or more of the following symptoms (new or worsening) sore throat, runny nose/nasal congestion, headache, shortness of breath.

If the patient fails the screening *and* has not been tested for COVID-19, they should be directed to complete the <u>COVID-19 self-assessment</u> or contact 811 to arrange for testing. **Treatment should be deferred unless it is a true dental emergency.** If it is not a true dental emergency, the patient should be managed pharmacologically until such time as their COVID-19 status is known.

Patients who inform you they are required to isolate, or screen positive for symptoms, and are assessed and found to have a true dental emergency, should be treated using airborne precautions or referred to a facility that has the infrastructure to provide dental care using airborne precautions (i.e., operatories with floor to ceiling walls and doors, appropriate negative pressure ventilation, and PPE).

All border restrictions for domestic travellers entering Nova Scotia have been lifted as of Monday February 14, 2022. As of that date, there will be no isolation requirements or Nova Scotia Safe Check-in form. International travelers will continue to follow federal rules, the details of which can be found <u>here</u>.

Up-to-date information on the isolation requirements for close contacts can be found on the Nova Scotia Health website <u>here</u>.

2.3 Management of Patients Who Have Had COVID-19

People with COVID-19 who have ended home isolation can receive dental care. In Nova Scotia, discontinuation of home isolation for patient with COVID-19 occurs at the direction of NS Public Health, the guidelines for which can be found <u>here</u>.

Absence of a cough is not required for those known to have a chronic cough or for those who are experiencing reactive airways post-infection.

Patients who have tested positive for COVID-19 and have not yet ended home isolation should not be treated unless life threatening, and if so, they should be referred to the appropriate centre that can provide the necessary care using **airborne precautions**.

2.4 Daily Assessment for Office/Clinic Staff

All DHCPs and other staff should perform daily COVID screening using the same symptoms list for patients (see Appendix B). DHCPs and staff who develop a fever (greater than 38°C) or fever like symptoms: chills or sweats OR a new or worsening cough OR two or more of the following symptoms (new or worsening) sore throat, runny nose/nasal congestion, headache, shortness of breath, as outlined in Appendix B must exclude themselves from the workplace and contact 811. Those required to isolate must exclude themselves from the workplace until cleared following criteria specific to Health Care Workers, as applicable. Consider using a chart to record the screening results (see Appendix B). If a member of the office tests positive for COVID-19, they must remain out of the workplace until determined to be recovered.

3.0 **During the Appointment**

It is recommended that dentists carefully manage patient and staff flow. This includes the following:

- Have patients notify your office once they have arrived and direct them when it is appropriate to enter the clinic.
- It is acceptable to use waiting rooms if social distancing measures are enforced.
- Review screening questions prior to allowing patients entry into the clinic.
- Accompanying individuals should wait outside of the office (exception being a legal guardian or a caregiver, who should also be screened).
- Ensure that the patient washes their hands or uses hand sanitizer upon initial entry to the office and proceeds directly to the operatory if possible. All staff providing direct patient care or working in patient care areas must wear a surgical mask at all times and in all areas of the workplace. This includes involvement in direct patient contact and in cases where they cannot maintain adequate physical distancing (2 meters) from patients and co-workers.
- Any staff not working in patient care areas (e.g., receptionists) or who do not have direct patient contact must wear a mask (surgical or non-surgical) at all times in the workplace even if a physical barrier (e.g. plexiglass) is in place.
- Use of staff common areas (e.g., staff rooms) must be scheduled to enable staff to maintain physical distancing.
- Inside the treatment area, remove all non-essential items for direct patient care.
- Have the patient wash their hands (or use hand sanitizer) before they leave the office.
- Record contact information for patients and any individual who may accompany the patient to the appointment.

4.0 After the Appointment

- Try to have paperwork completed before the patient arrives at reception.
- Choose a touchless payment method, if possible.
- After the patient leaves, disinfect all patient contact surfaces.

• Inform patients to notify the office if they develop signs/symptoms of COVID-19 within 48 hours following the appointment.

4.1 Patient Follow-Up

Even when DHCP screen patients for respiratory infections, inadvertent treatment of a dental patient who is later confirmed to have COVID-19 may occur. To address this, DHCP should request that the patient inform the dental clinic if they develop symptoms or are diagnosed with COVID-19 within 2 days following the dental appointment.

https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/dental-settings.html#Management

5.0 Personal Protective Equipment

Historically, the use of personal protective equipment (PPE) in dentistry was intended to protect DHCPs against bloodborne pathogens. Use of PPE only forms part of our profession's standard precautions, formerly known as universal precautions. **Standard precautions** now include:

- Hand hygiene;
- Use of PPE;
- Respiratory hygiene/cough etiquette;
- Sharps safety;
- Safe injection practices; and
- Clean and disinfected environmental surfaces.¹

When a pathogenic outbreak occurs within a community or healthcare facility, transmission-based precautions should be implemented in addition to standard precautions. **Transmission-based precautions** include contact, droplet and airborne precautions, depending on the route of transmission of the pathogen.² Some pathogens such as SARS-Cov2, which causes the disease known as COVID-19, are spread primarily via droplets but may also be transmissible via airborne/aerosol spread. In dentistry, the latter occurs primarily during an AGP. **Research is currently ongoing to determine the relationship between AGPs and transmission of the COVID-19 virus. Until such studies have been completed, transmission-based precautions should be implemented in addition to standard precautions. This will ensure the safety of the public and of DHCPs.**

DHCPs must always use appropriate PPE, particularly during a global pandemic such as COVID-19. PPE requirements differ based on the health status of the patient, as well as the nature of the procedure (AGP vs NAGP). There are several types of PPE recommended to mitigate risk during the provision of dental care. These include eye/face protection (e.g., goggles, face shields, and safety glasses), respiratory protection (e.g., surgical masks and fit-tested respirators, such as N95s), disposable or reusable gowns, and gloves.

5.1 Eye/Face Protection

Eye protection has always been recommended as part of standard precautions for the practice of dentistry. Goggles and/or face shields are recommended to be used when treating patients during the global COVID-19 pandemic. They must be used for treating all patients, regardless of the type of procedure being performed (AGP vs. NAGP). Goggles have the advantage of forming a protective seal around the eyes, which prevents droplets from entering around or under them. The disadvantages of goggles are that they do not provide splash or spray protection to other areas of the face, they tend to fog, and they may become uncomfortable with extended use.^{3,4}

The advantages of face shields are that they provide a barrier for the entire face to aerosols, droplets, and splatter; they are more comfortable; and they are easy to don and doff. The disadvantage of face shields is that they lack a peripheral seal. There are different types of face shields which may be used depending on the clinical situation. For instance, a full-face shield would be indicated during an AGP, whereas a visor

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attached to a surgical mask would be considered acceptable for NAGPs. The CDC suggests that the bare minimum for eye protection is safety glasses that have extensions to cover the side of the eyes, but these should only be used if access to a higher level of protection is not available.

It is at the discretion of the DHCP as to what type of eye protection they choose to wear. The important concept - regardless of whether goggles, a face shield, or a combination of both are used - is that the PPE must protect the eyes of the DHCP from splatter, droplets, and aerosols that may be generated during the provision of dental care.

Extended use of eye protection is the practice of wearing the same eye protection for repeated close contact encounters with several different patients, without removing the eye protection between patient encounters. Extended use of eye protection can be applied to disposable and reusable devices. Eye protection must be removed and reprocessed if it becomes visibly soiled or difficult to see through. If a disposable face shield is reprocessed, it should be dedicated to one DHCP and disinfected whenever it is visibly soiled or is removed. Eye protection must be discarded if damaged (e.g. the face shield can no longer fasten securely to the provider, if visibility is obscured, or if reprocessing does not restore visibility). The DHCP should take care not to touch their eye protection. If they touch or adjust their eye protection, they must immediately perform hand hygiene. The DHCP should leave the patient care area if they need to remove their eye protection.

Disinfection

DHCPs should adhere to recommended manufacturer instructions for cleaning and disinfection of their eye protection and ensure that the disinfectant solution is approved by Health Canada (<u>https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/drugs-health-products/disinfectants/covid-19/list.html</u>). When manufacturer instructions for cleaning and disinfection are unavailable, such as for single use disposable face shields, consider the following:

- While wearing gloves, carefully wipe the inside, followed by the outside, of the face shield or goggles using a clean cloth saturated with neutral detergent solution or cleaner wipe.
- Carefully wipe the *outside* of the face shield or goggles using a wipe or clean cloth saturated with a Health Canada approved disinfectant solution.
- Wipe the outside of the face shield or goggles with clean water or alcohol to remove residue.
- Fully dry (air dry or use clean absorbent towels).
- Remove gloves and perform hand hygiene.

5.2 Lab Coats/Gowns

Lab coats/gowns are long-sleeved garments that are intended to be **patient-specific items** of protective clothing and must be removed prior to seeing the subsequent patient. Lab coats/gowns are worn over regular clinic clothing, such as uniforms or scrubs, during AGPs or during procedures likely to generate splatter or droplets of blood, body fluids, secretions, or excretions. Gowns can be disposable and made of synthetic fibre or a washable cloth gown. Reusable items must be disinfected properly after each use.^{5, 6, 7}

5.3 Masks and Respirators (N95)

Surgical masks, also known as medical masks, are affixed to the head with straps and cover the user's nose and mouth. They provide a physical barrier to fluids and particulate materials. The mask is considered a device by the FDA when it is intended for medical use and meets certain fluid barrier protection standards and Class I or Class II flammability tests. ASTM level 1, 2, and 3 masks all satisfy that definition. Cloth or homemade masks do not meet the definition of a surgical mask and are not considered PPE. A table outlining the ASTM standards is provided below. The main difference between ASTM levels is their resistance to penetration by synthetic blood at different velocities to simulate different types of bleeding.

Characteristic	Level 1 Barrier	Level 2 Barrier	Level 3 Barrier
Bacterial filtration efficiency, %	≥95	≥98	≥98
Differential pressure, mm H ₂ O/cm ²	<5.0	<6.0	<6.0
Sub-micron particulate filtration efficiency	≥95	≥98	≥98
at 0.1 micron, %			
Resistance to penetration by synthetic	80	120	160
blood,			
minimum pressure in mm Hg for pass			
result			
Flame spread	Class 1	Class 1	Class 1

ASTM Standards - Designation: F2100 – 19 Standard Specification for Performance of Materials Used in Medical Face Masks

Surgical masks are not designed to provide a seal and do not prevent leakage of air around the edge of the mask during breathing. This is a major limitation for protection against small-particle aerosols (droplet nuclei) when compared to respirators. Respirators include filtering facepiece respirators (FFR), such as N95s, elastomeric half-face respirators, and powered air purifying respirators (PAPRs).

Commercial and surgical grade N95 respirators are of similar structure and design. Both types of respirators should comply with NIOSH standards. However, only the surgical grade N95 will comply with both NIOSH and FDA standards. The main difference between the two grades is that commercial N95 respirators are not tested for fluid resistance of any type. Therefore, surgical grade respirators are preferred for patient care.

There are several classes of filters for NIOSH-approved filtering facepiece respirators. Ninety-five percent is the minimal level of filtration that will be approved by NIOSH. Examples include N95, Surgical N95, N99, N100, R95, R99, P95, P99, and P100. The N, R, P designations refer to resistance to oil which is not applicable to dentistry and is different than resistance to fluid. Always check to ensure that your respirator is fluid resistant, and, if it is not, create fluid resistance by adding a surgical mask or full-face shield as mentioned above.

If surgical N95 respirators are not available and there is a risk that the worker may be exposed to high velocity droplets or splatters of blood or body fluids, a face shield or surgical mask must be worn over the commercial N95 respirator to provide the fluid resistance necessary. NIOSH and FDA standards are recognized by Health Canada. During pandemic times, with limited supply of PPE, non-NIOSH respirators produced in other countries with similar standards have been deemed acceptable by the CDC. See link below for a list of acceptable alternatives (P2, P3, PFF2, PFF3, KN/KP95, KN/KP100, FFP2, FFP3, DS/DL2, DS/DL3, Special, 1st) <u>https://blogs.cdc.gov/niosh-science-blog/2020/04/23/imported-respirators/</u>. If commercial respirators are used as an alternative to NIOSH-approved N95 respirators, they must be fit-tested and used with a face shield or surgical mask to protect against fluid penetration.^{8, 9, 10, 11}

Table 2: Adapted from: World Health Organization. "Rational use of Personal Protective Equipment for Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)." (February 27, 2020):

Setting	Staff	Patients Procedure/Activity	Type of PPE	
			Surgical mask ^{*,9,10,11}	
			Eye/Face protection ^{3,4}	
	Providing direct care (NAGP)	Protective clothing (e.g. scrubs)		
			Gloves	

Setting	Staff	Patients Procedure/Activity	Type of PPE
	Dental Health Care Provider (DHCP)	Aerosol-generating procedures	Fit tested N95 respirator or the equivalent (as approved by Health Canada) OR surgical mask AND face shield ^{9,10,11}
		(AGP)	Eye/Face protection ^{3,4}
			Gown/lab coat ^{7,12,5}
Patient			Gloves
room	Disinfecting treatment rooms for NAGPs		Surgical mask ^{*,9,10,11}
			Eye/Face protection ^{3,4}
			Protective clothing (e.g. scrubs)
			Gloves
			Surgical mask ^{*,9,10,11}
	Disinfecting		Eye/Face Protection ^{3,4}
	treatment rooms for AGPs		Protective clothing (e.g. scrubs)
			Gloves
	Visitors	No visitors during AGPs **	Non-surgical or surgical mask
			Non-surgical or Surgical
			Mask ^{*,9,10,11}
Reception	Front office staff	Arrival screening	
			Maintain spatial distance of at least 2m
			when possible.

*ASTM I, II or III

** exception being a legal guardian or a caregiver, who should also be screened. If a physical distance of 2 meters <u>cannot</u> be maintained, the legal guardian or a caregiver must wear the same PPE as the DHCP. If a 2-meter distance <u>can</u> be maintained, the legal guardian or caregiver must still wear a mask.

5.4 Masks and Respirators for AGP's

Dental healthcare providers use:

- a fit-tested N95 respirator (or Health Canada approved alternative) or
- surgical mask AND face shield

5.5 Facility Requirements

At present, the PDBNS does not require dental practices to make major infrastructure changes, such as air filtration upgrades or changes to existing office designs (i.e. floor to ceiling walls and doors). The PDBNS is not recommending observing "settling times" based on air changes per hour (ACH) at present. The PDBNS does suggest placing a transparent barrier (plexiglass/plastic) at the reception desk to ensure separation between staff and patients during transactions, *AND* that you ensure that reception staff wear a non-surgical or surgical mask.

A physical distance of at least 2 meters should be maintained in the handling of packages. Consider contactless shipping and receiving methods such as leaving the package on a doorstep. If physical distancing cannot be maintained, proper PPE (I.e. surgical/procedure mask and gloves) should be worn. Dispose of all single-use shipping materials (e.g., plastic bags) that have contacted the received items. If the items are reusable, properly disinfect (whenever possible sterilize) them according to manufacturer's instructions. As a precautionary measure, treat all received items as contaminated. Increased caution

should be used when handling items that have had direct patient contact. These items must be thoroughly disinfected or sterilized, as appropriate, before proceeding. Clean and disinfect the area for receiving incoming cases immediately after decontamination of each case. Clean and properly disinfect (whenever possible sterilize) items before sending them out. Package and label to indicate "cleaned and disinfected".

5.6 Safe Management of Linen (Laundry)

All linen used in the direct care of patients must be managed as 'infectious' linen. Linen must be handled, transported, and processed in a manner that prevents exposure to the skin and mucous membranes of staff and contamination of their clothing and the environment. Disposable gloves and a gown or apron should be worn when handling infectious linen.^{13, 14}

Single bags of sufficient tensile strength are adequate for containing laundry, but leak-resistant containment is needed if the laundry is wet and capable of soaking through a cloth bag. Bags containing contaminated laundry must be clearly identified with labels, color-coding, or other methods so that staff responsible for laundry can handle these items safely. Dispose of the used bags into the normal waste stream.

Laundry services for healthcare facilities are provided either on or off-premises using the following protocol:

- separate from other linen;
- in a load not more than half the machine capacity; and
- at the maximum temperature the fabric can tolerate, then ironed or tumbled-dried.

DHCPs must change into and out of uniforms at work and not wear them outside the office.

6.0 Infection Prevention and Control Measures

6.1 Considerations

- We recommend reviewing the NSDA IPAC document prior to returning to practice. (<u>https://nsdental.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/ClinicalResource-20181204-NSDA-InfectionPreventionControl.pdf</u>)
- Ensure that cleaning staff are fully versed in the enhanced cleaning protocol for COVID-19 (refer to PPE table).
- Regularly disinfect high-touch surfaces in the front desk area, waiting room, and staff room using a Health Canada approved disinfectant. (<u>https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/drugs-health-products/disinfectants/covid-19/list.html</u>).
- Emphasize hand hygiene as an important measure for preventing the transmission of microorganisms. Hand hygiene can be performed using soap and running water or a hand sanitizer. The minimum time for hand washing is 20 seconds. For alcohol-based hand sanitizers, follow the minimum times recommended by the manufacturer.
- When placing instruments in an ultrasonic cleaner prior to the sterilization process, the lid must be kept on the unit to ensure that aerosols are not created.
- All DHCPs must practice social distancing when possible.
- Do not store disposables, supplies, gauze, tissue, and local anaesthetic in open areas of the treatment room. Clear the treatment areas of all items other than those necessary to carry out the treatment.
- Upon return to practice, waterlines must be purged by flushing them thoroughly with water for at least 2 minutes at the beginning of each day and for 30 seconds following each patient. Before purging is carried out, handpieces and air/water syringe tips must be removed from the waterlines.

7.0 References

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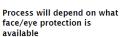
Appendix A: Donning and Doffing PPE

GUIDE TO PUTTING ON PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

Droplet & Contact Precautions (Universal Masking)



Procedure/surgical mask



Scenario 1- If goggles or fullface shield is available, leave mask on and proceed to Step 2.

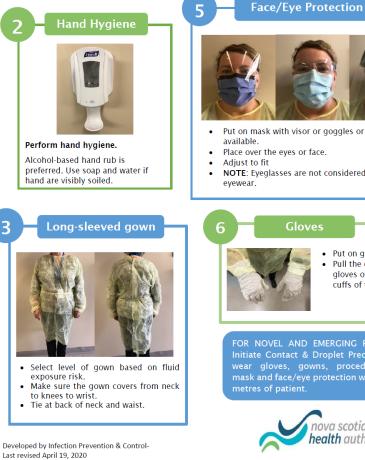
Scenario 2- If mask needs to be replaced with a mask with visor or N95, perform hand hygiene, remove original mask, and store as per guidance. Proceed to Step 2.



• Required for AGMPs for patients with unknown. novel or emerging pathogens. Refer to manufacturer

for specific donning instructions.

- Perform a 'seal check' with each use.
- N95 respirators must be 'fit tested' prior to use.



Put on mask with visor or goggles or full shield as

- NOTE: Eyeglasses are not considered protective



wear gloves, gowns, procedure/surgical mask and face/eye protection when within 2 metres of patient.





Appendix B: COVID-19 Self-Screening Tool (Updated March 7, 2022)

If DHCPs or office staff have any of the following **new or worsening** signs or symptoms, or they are required to isolate, they must exclude themselves from work and they must complete the <u>online assessment</u>, or contact 811, and arrange for COVID-19 testing. Throughout the shift, each individual is to monitor and if any symptoms develop during the shift, they are to exclude themselves from work at that time.

NAME: _____

DATE: _____

Signs or Symptom	Yes or No
In the past 48 hours, had or is currently experiencing one of the following	
symptoms	
Unexplained Fever (> 38 deg C)	
A new or worsening cough	
OR Two or more of the following symptoms (new or worsening)	
Sore throat	
Runny nose/nasal congestion	
Shortness of breath	
Headache	
Required to isolate for any reason?	

COVID-19 Signs and Symptoms

Appendix C: COVID-19 Patient Screening Tool (Updated March 7, 2022)

COVID-19 Signs and Symptoms

Signs or Sy	Yes or No	
Do you hav		
•	A fever (greater than 38°C) or fever like symptoms: chills or sweats;	
	or	
•	A new or worsening cough.	
<u>OR:</u>		
Do you hav	e two or more of the following symptoms (new or worsening)?	
•	Sore throat	
•	Runny nose/nasal congestion	
•	Headache	
•	Shortness of breath.	
Are you ree	quired to isolate for any reason?	