



## Provincial Dental Board of Nova Scotia

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### Deactivation of PDBNS COVID-19 Reopening Plan for Dentistry

On March 18, 2022, Premier Tim Houston and Dr. Robert Strang, Nova Scotia's Chief Medical Officer of Health (CMOH), held a press conference and confirmed that the province will be moving ahead with its plan to end public health restrictions on March 21, 2022. The only change to the previously announced plan is that masks will still be required in schools and high-risk settings, such as healthcare and long-term care. The related press release can be found [at this link](#).

Dr. Strang strongly encouraged Nova Scotians to continue wearing masks in indoor public places. He stressed that anyone with symptoms of COVID-19 needs to self-isolate, complete the online self-assessment and book an appointment for testing. People who are at increased risk for severe disease, live in congregate settings or are integral to keeping our health system running are directed to book a PCR test. Everyone else is directed to use rapid tests. People who test positive on a rapid test can book a PCR test to confirm the result.

As of Monday, March 21, the [PDBNS COVID-19 Reopening Plan for Dentistry](#) and the [Return to Work Guidelines for NS Oral Health Professions](#) will cease to be in effect with the following exception: In light of the emphasis Dr. Strang put on continued measures in healthcare settings, masks will continue to be mandatory for all individuals in dental offices. This will be re-evaluated as we go forward.

Once again, we would like to highlight some Infection Control and Prevention (IPAC) measures which will also remain in effect. These are either in the [NSDA 2013 Guideline](#) or will be in the updated IPAC Standard which we plan to finalize and release later this year. These measures include:

- keeping operatories decluttered to facilitate surface disinfection between patients
- diligent hand hygiene and [cough etiquette](#)
- wearing masks and eye protection at all times during patient care and when processing contaminated instruments
- wearing patient-specific gowns or lab coats for AGPs or during procedures likely to generate splatter or droplets of blood, body fluids, secretions, or excretions
- removal of clinic attire (e.g., scrubs) before leaving the clinic
- advising staff and patients to refrain from coming to the office when sick

Yesterday, Dr. Strang affirmed the right of businesses and organizations to set their own policies with respect to protocols. As previously mentioned, registrants and dental practices are free to maintain additional measures as they deem appropriate according to their own clinical judgement.

The other Nova Scotia oral health regulators may have additional specific guidance for their registrants.

We will continue to stay abreast of the COVID-19 situation and take direction from the office of the CMOH. Once again, much appreciation goes to all oral healthcare providers and the public for their cooperation and patience during the pandemic.

Sincerely,

Dr. Doug Mackey, Registrar