



COLLEGE OF DIETITIANS
OF ALBERTA

Information for Private Practice, and other Dietitians as applicable: Safely Returning to Practice

May 1, 2020

We encourage Registered Dietitians (RDs) that are working virtually, to continue to do so when they can. For those who will be seeing patients/clients in person the following guidelines are meant to assist you in returning to face to face interactions with patients/clients in their businesses.

All Dietitians must continue to take measures as outlined by Alberta Health to promote physical distancing where possible, and where not, to use appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE).

Patient and Client Considerations

- Initial patient and client bookings will need to be limited to maintain necessary public health measures, but may need to be prioritized by urgency.
- Patient and client bookings should be scheduled in a manner that ensures no more than 15 patients/clients are required to gather in waiting areas.
- If clients must attend with children or other family members, those individuals must be included in the maximum number of people allowed in the area. Should scheduling errors result in more than 15 people, alternate waiting areas should be planned.
- Alternative solutions to waiting in the office should be considered, such as asking people to wait in vehicles and text messaging or calling when appointments are ready.
- At the time of booking or in advance of an appointment, clinic staff should call patients/clients to inform them of the public health measures. Staff should also ask if patients/clients have been experiencing symptoms of illness consistent with COVID-19.
- Seats in waiting areas should be spaced to maintain a minimum physical distance of two metres. Household contacts are not required to separate.
- Visual cues for areas where patients/clients are required to queue should be marked and a directional flow through the facility established.
- Non-essential items should be removed from client waiting areas, including magazines, toys, and remote controls.
- Staff should screen all patients/clients for visible symptoms consistent with COVID-19. Anyone who is symptomatic should be asked to wear a surgical/procedure mask. Note: Health professionals may determine if appointments for symptomatic clients should be cancelled.
- Common areas and other high-touch surfaces and objects should be cleaned and disinfected after each use, including reception counters, seating areas (including clinic room seats), doors, handrails and objects or machines used in therapies.

- All health professionals must practice effective hand hygiene after each client - washing their hands with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer approved by Health Canada (DIN or NPN number).
- Employers should carefully consider the appropriate use of personal protective equipment for staff and patients/clients. For more information see Alberta Personal Protective Equipment Guideline at <https://www.alberta.ca/assets/documents/covid-19-healthcare-ppc-guidance.pdf>
- Carefully consider any COVID-19 safe return-to-work recommendations provided by other regulatory bodies or professional associations.

Cleaning and Disinfecting

- The COVID19 virus can survive for several days on different surfaces and objects. Frequent cleaning and disinfection is important to prevent spread of the disease.
- Workplaces should implement enhanced environmental cleaning. Commonly touched areas and shared equipment should be cleaned and disinfected at least twice daily or whenever visibly soiled.
- Wherever possible, discourage workers from sharing phones, desks, offices and other tools and equipment.
- Commonly touched areas include light switches, door handles, toilets, taps, hand rails, counter tops, touch screens/mobile devices and keyboards.
- Cleaning and Sanitizing information is available at: <https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/assets/info/ppih/if-ppih-covid-19-environmental-cleaning-public-facilities.pdf>
- Hand sanitizers should be approved by Health Canada (DIN or NPN number) to ensure they are effective.

Where adherence to this guideline is not possible, RDs must continue to provide virtual services, until it is possible to adhere to the guideline and/or Alberta Health recommendations change.

If you have questions, please contact the College office.

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Adapted from the Medical Professionals Guideline, Saskatchewan COVID-19 re-open plan, Government of Saskatchewan.