



COLLEGE OF

ALBERTA DENTURISTS

Guidelines for Working through the COVID-19 Pandemic

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*This and its associated documents provide practice
guidance to denturists during COVID-19 pandemic*



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COVID-19 Guidelines

Overview

As Alberta continues to push through the COVID-19 pandemic, regulated healthcare providers need to remain diligent in applying infection prevention and control practices.

Dealing with COVID-19 will be part of regular practice for all healthcare professionals for the foreseeable future, and lessons learned through the pandemic should support denturists in their practice on an ongoing basis.

It is important to note that provincial requirements, public health orders, and municipal Bylaws and rules may affect the workplace. Denturists should keep themselves up-to-date and informed on COVID-19, including any public health orders such as quarantine/isolation requirements, masking requirements or any other requirements put forth by provincial public health officials and their respective municipality.

These guidelines replace the College of Alberta Denturists COVID-19 Return-To-Work Guidelines and are intended to guide denturists forward.

The College of Alberta Denturists continues to consult with external stakeholders, including the other oral health regulators, other health regulatory Colleges, the Ministry of Health, and the Chief Medical Officer of Health (CMOH). These guidelines represent the latest evidence-based practice and are subject to change as more information and evidence becomes available. Denturists must ensure that they are versed in and are complying with current requirements.

Purpose

This guidance will relate to the safe provision of care by our regulated members in the context of COVID-19. Health regulatory Colleges exist to protect the public while also considering the health and safety of their members. This document has been created to ensure the health and safety of both the public and denturists while instilling patient confidence as they safely access denturist care.

Regulated members are required to understand what requirements are in place affecting their practice. Those who fail to adhere to these mandatory guidelines are subject to professional conduct measures. Members have an ethical and legislated obligation to report non-compliance with any regulatory directives to the offending member's regulatory College.

Please note: These guidelines and directives are current as of the date of publication. In the event of a discrepancy between this information and the current directives of provincial public health authorities, these directions of the provincial public health authority take precedence.

Should any questions arise, do not hesitate to contact the College for clarification.

Provision of Care

All oral health practitioners have a responsibility to provide continuity of care for their patients. This is consistent with all oral health Colleges; however, the level and timelines at which practice may resume may differ between regulatory bodies.

As COVID-19 community spread continues, it is prudent to monitor these Guidelines and best practice requirements.

Preparation for Clinical Care

Practice considerations

All employers and staff are:

- compliant with these guidelines put in place by the College
- aware of current requirements in place as per Alberta public health. These requirements include, but are not limited to, isolation should someone test positive for COVID-19 or be symptomatic with an influenza-like illness (ILI).
- In alignment with the [General Operational Guidance](#), provided by the Government of Alberta, for businesses and entities.
- Aware of the [Occupational Health and Safety](#) responsibilities and best practices for the assessment and control of hazards in the workplace.

Point of Care Risk Assessment

All denturists are required to continue to perform a point of care risk assessment (PCRA) for each patient interaction. A PCRA is required as additional precautions beyond routine practices may be necessary. The PCRA must be noted in the patient chart.

The College has provided the following risk assessment algorithm for members to use as a resource in addition to appropriate clinical judgment on appropriate infection prevention and control (IPC) measures when providing care during the COVID-19 pandemic. This [Point of Care Risk Assessment](#) will help practitioners to decide what IPC precautions are required in each patient interaction.

The PCRA includes practices such as patient screening during patient booking and upon presentation in the clinic or laboratory. Likewise, oral healthcare professionals should ensure screening of themselves and any staff that may be attending to the clinic. Further, the PCRA also informs the dentist if a pre-procedural mouth wash or disinfection of prostheses or appliances is required.

For more information and examples, please visit these [screening guidelines](#).

Please note: when providing patient care, denturists should only request a vaccine history from patient if the immunization history is relevant to the provision of services. Vaccine history should not be used to determine a client's eligibility to receive care.

Booking and environmental management

The dentist should ensure patient booking is managed to facilitate physical distancing within the clinic. This may include limiting the appointment attendance to the patient only or allowing one support person to accompany the patient, as appropriate.

The College recommends that bookings accommodate adequate time for effective environmental cleaning and disinfection between patient encounters.

Clinical Care

Hand Hygiene

Members are expected to maintain good hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette in all settings. **Appropriate hand hygiene is never optional.** Hand hygiene is essential in ensuring an effective IPC program. For detailed information and resources, please [click here](#) to visit the AHS hand hygiene webpage.

In providing all patient care:

- ▣ Denturists and staff shall perform hand hygiene in accordance with four moments for hand hygiene:
 - Moment One: before contact with a patient or patient's environment
 - Moment Two: before a clean or aseptic procedure
 - Moment Three: after exposure or risk of exposure to blood and/or body fluids, including but not limited to when hands are visibly soiled, following removal of gloves; and
 - Moment Four: after contact with a patient or patient's environment; including but not limited doffing PPE, including gloves; leaving a patient's environment; and after handling patient care equipment.
- ▣ perform hand hygiene using alcohol-based hand rub or soap and water as described in Routine Practices,
- ▣ ensure that appropriate nail care (i.e., no artificial nails or nail polish) is being performed,
- ▣ not wear jewelry on hands or wrists at this time in order to decrease the incidence of COVID-19 remaining on a surface after cleaning, and
- ▣ educate patients and visitors about how and when to use hand hygiene products.

Respiratory Etiquette

All denturists, staff, and patients must wear a face mask at all times and in all areas of the workplace. This aligns with the Alberta [Chief Medical Officer of Health Orders 40-2021 and 41-2021](#). Further, exemptions may be appropriate as stipulated in the order.

Personal Protective Equipment

A denturist works in many situations within a day, and they should consider the risk associated with each activity before proceeding. At a minimum, a denturist must don the following personal protective equipment (PPE) in the following situations:

Patient interaction with no intraoral work

- ▣ surgical/procedure mask

Patient interaction with intraoral work (non aerosol-generating procedure)

- ▣ surgical/procedure mask
- ▣ gloves
- ▣ eye protection



Aerosol-generating procedures (i.e., grinding)

- ▣ surgical/procedure mask
- ▣ gloves
- ▣ eye protection and face shield
- ▣ protective clothing (covers front and sleeves of denturist) that can be removed when leaving the area of the aerosol-generating procedure (i.e., gown, lab coat). It is recommended that this clothing be laundered in between patient cases.

After Clinical Care

It is imperative that the practitioner ensure adequate cleaning and disinfection between procedures, where appropriate, and between patients.



Resources

Alberta Health Services

- [AHS IPC Emerging issues Webpage](#)
- [Cover your Cough poster](#)
- [All AHS COVID-19 related posters](#)
- [Interim IPC Recommendations COVID-19](#)
- [Personal Protective Equipment - Novel coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)
- [Point of Care Risk Assessment](#)
- [Alberta Health Services Routine Practices in Community-Based Services](#)

Government of Canada

- [Routine Practices and Additional Precautions for Preventing the Transmission of Infection in Healthcare Settings, Public Health Agency of Canada](#)
- [Infection Prevention and Control for COVID-19: Second interim guidance for acute healthcare settings](#)
- [Risk-informed decision-making guidelines for workplaces and businesses during the COVID-19 pandemic](#)
- [Hard surface disinfectants and hand sanitizers \(COVID-19\)](#)
- [Fraudulent and unauthorized N95 respirators may not protect consumers against COVID-19](#)

Alberta-specific

- [Alberta Chief Medical Officer of Health Order 40-2021](#)
- [Alberta Chief Medical Officer of Health Order 41-2021](#)
- [Alberta Chief Medical Officer of Health Order 39-2021](#)
- [Alberta Chief Medical Officer of Health Order 05-2020](#)
- [Alberta Chief Medical Officer of Health Order 07-2020](#)
- [Alberta Chief Medical Officer of Health Order 16-2020](#)
- [Alberta College of Registered Dental Hygienists Return-to-Work Guidelines](#)
- [Alberta Dental Association and College: Infection Prevention and Control Standards and Risk Management for Dentistry](#)



- [College of Dental Technologists of Alberta Return-to-Work Guidelines](#)
- [Alberta Occupational Health and Safety Legislation](#)
- [Alberta Biz Connect](#)

Other references

- [CDC - Interim U.S. Guidance for Risk Assessment and Work Restrictions for Healthcare Personnel with Potential Exposure to COVID-19](#)
- [CDC - Introduction to Hand Hygiene for Healthcare Providers](#)
- [ADA - Hand Hygiene for the Dental Team](#)
- [Interim Infection Prevention and Control Guidance for Dental Settings During the COVID-19 Response](#)
 - [Introduction to Hand Hygiene for Healthcare Providers](#)
 - [Workplace Guidance for Business Owners](#)