

Cold and Flu Season Guideline

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It is essential that physiotherapists protect their patients from the effects of influenza, COVID-19 and other seasonal respiratory illnesses which become more prevalent into the Fall and Winter seasons.

In the absence of a Public Health Order, the Council of CPM is entrusting the decision to use PPE to the clinic/employer and the individual physiotherapist.

As physiotherapists are employed in a variety of work environments, the guidance for best practices, such as masking, will depend on your work setting and employer policies and mandates. If you work in a Shared Health/Regional Health Authority (RHAs) facility, please follow the clinical guidelines provided to you from your employer.

If you are employed outside of Shared Health or the RHAs, please note the College of Physiotherapists of Manitoba is aligned with Public Health's clinically informed approach to mitigating the effects of these illnesses. When deciding to follow best practices, such as masking, consider the well-being of your patients, staff and visitors. As individual physiotherapists and clinics have the discretion to determine the use of PPE, the College assumes you will choose an approach that best suits your environment and individual patient needs and risks.

This guidance is in line with the Code of Ethics which states:

“Members of the physiotherapy profession have an ethical responsibility to practice in a safe, competent, accountable and responsible manner during the provision of services.”

“Take all reasonable steps to prevent harm to clients. Should harm occur disclose it to the client and others as required.”

Guidelines

To ensure access to care and to meet the individual needs of your patients:

- Assess the risk for individual patients being seen when establishing Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) requirements.

The College of Physiotherapists of Manitoba gratefully acknowledges the College of Physicians and Surgeons in preparing this guideline.

- Maintain a mask-friendly environment where all patients, staff and other visitors feel comfortable wearing a mask.
- You must not restrict access to care for patients who have COVID-19. Consider how you can best provide care to them, such as planning to see them at the end of the day or taking other precautions.

Additionally, you may want to remind your patients and staff of the tools available to help protect themselves, their families, and the community during the respiratory virus season, including:

- choosing to be immunized against COVID-19 and the flu;
- staying home when they're sick and until they're feeling better and no longer have a fever;
- regularly washing hands or using hand sanitizer;
- covering coughs and sneezes;
- choosing to wear a mask as an extra layer of protection;
- regularly cleaning and disinfecting shared surfaces and objects; and
- choosing to get the pneumococcal vaccine (for those who are eligible).

Resources

Manitoba Health - <https://www.gov.mb.ca/covid19/index.html>

Shared Health - <https://sharedhealthmb.ca/covid19/>