

Dr. Gary Wessels, Inc.

COVID-19 Safety Plan

May 25, 2020

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The workplace has been assessed in order to identify places where the risk of transmission is introduced. This process has involved all members of our clinical and administrative team, as well as dentists (Dr. Wessels and Dr. Harvey). We will continue to assess the workplace after operations resume to ensure risks are identified and managed.

The virus that causes COVID-19 spreads in several ways, including through droplets when a person coughs or sneezes, or from touching a contaminated surface before touching the face.

To understand the risk in our clinic, we considered the following questions:

- Where do people congregate, such as break rooms, front desk, or hallways?
- What job tasks or processes require team members to come into close proximity with one another or members of the public?
- What tools, instruments, and objects do people come into contact with in the course of their work?
- What surfaces are touched often, such as doorknobs, light switches, equipment, and shared objects?
- What is unique to our clinic / industry environment that may increase risk that we must manage?
- What characteristics might our patients have that must be considered in terms of staff, patient, and community risk?

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Implement measures to reduce the risk

We have selected and put measures in place to minimize the risk of transmission. This has included a thorough review of industry-specific protocols for dentistry. We have clearly communicated these rules and guidelines through verbal training, written documentation, and signage.

Maintaining physical distance

- We have reduced the overall number of team members and patients in the clinic at one time.
- We have ensured that the appropriate number of people are in each area of a workplace to prevent workers from coming too close to one another or members of the public. This will be done, for example, by limiting the number of workers at one time in break locations.
- We will Maintain a distance of 2 metres (6 feet) between workers and others wherever possible

Where physical distance cannot be maintained

- Where distance cannot be maintained, we are separating people with partitions or plexiglass [barriers](#)
- Where other measures are not sufficient, we are using medical masks and other healthcare-specific personal protective equipment, while understanding that these have limitations.
- All team members will be masked while at work unless they are working in partitioned areas

Patient Flow / Visitor Protocols

- We have designed specific appointment, transaction, and documentation protocols to reduce risk of transmission.
- Only healthy patients with urgent needs will be seen during phase 2.

At this time, we will be prioritizing patients with urgent needs and care will be limited to healthy individuals age 70 and under who are free of chronic conditions which may put them at increased risk.

Our high standards for cleanliness, sterilization, and infection control continue to be in place. In light of the COVID-19 Pandemic, we have instituted additional protocols to ensure patient safety and that of our team.

We will operate in full compliance with recently updated regulations from WorkSafe BC, the CDC, and the College of Dental Surgeons in order to ensure patient safety, as well as that of our team members and community at large.

We anticipate that, following this soft “Phase 2” opening, health regulators will continue to modify guidelines over time, allowing us to progress more towards a full opening.

Cleaning and hygiene

- We provide adequate hand-washing facilities on site for all workers and ensure the location is visible and easily accessed. We have developed policies around when workers must wash their hands, including upon arriving for work, before and after breaks, after handling cash or other materials, before and after handling common objects.
- We have implemented a cleaning protocol for all common areas and surfaces, including washrooms, equipment, tools, treatment rooms, desks, light switches, and door handles. We have ensured that those engaged in cleaning have adequate training and materials.
- We have removed any unnecessary objects that may elevate the risk of transmission, including items like magazines or coffee tables in reception.

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Develop policies

We have developed policies around who can be at the clinic, how to address illness that arises at the workplace, and how workers can be kept safe in adjusted working conditions.

- The provincial health officer and the BCCDC have issued the following guidance around self-isolation, which is reflected in our policies.
- anyone who has had symptoms of COVID-19 in the last 14 days must self-isolate at home; symptoms include fever, chills, new or worsening cough, shortness of breath, sore throat and new muscle aches or headache.
- anyone under the direction of the provincial health officer to self-isolate must follow those instructions
- anyone who has arrived from outside of Canada, or who is a contact of a confirmed COVID-19 case, to [self-isolate for 14 days and monitor](#) for symptoms
- We have severely limited visitors and are operating under a “locked door” policy where entry is by appointment only.
- We have a plan for workers who may start to feel ill while at work, including who they should notify and exactly what to do if they notice symptoms.

Develop communication plans and training

We have made a plan to ensure that everyone entering the workplace, including workers from other employers, knows how to keep themselves safe while at our workplace.

- The following measures have been put in place to reduce risk of transmission:

-Focused team training on infection control and patient management procedures.

-We will only admit individuals to our facility who don't have COVID-19 or any of its symptoms.

-Patients will be contacted 48-72 hours prior to your appointment via phone, text or email and asked a set of health-related questions. It is required that we complete these questions at least 2 days prior to your appointment. We will have to reschedule your appointment if we are unable to complete this step.

-Personalized arrival procedures to guide patients from car directly to treatment rooms to eliminate contacting surfaces.

-All patients attending appointments will be asked to sign an acknowledgement of the risk of dental treatment during the COVID-19 Pandemic.

-All patients will be asked health-related questions again upon arrival.

-Maintenance of distancing (with masks) in the reception area for essential caregivers and parents of minors if they cannot wait in a vehicle or outside the clinic.

-Removal of magazines and items that can harbor or transfer germs of any kind. Hand sanitizers will be positioned throughout the clinic.

-Providing more education materials to enhance your awareness of health issues related to this pandemic.

-Requiring a mask to be worn by ALL patients upon entering the office.

-Requiring hand washing and hand sanitizing before and after all appointments by our team and by our patients.

-Introduction of an oral pre-rinse (Hydrogen Peroxide or similar) by all patients to reduce exposure to viruses and bacteria.

-Recording of temperature of every patient and visitor upon entering the office.

-Recording the temperature and health of every team member each day at beginning of work period.

- Creation of advance payment arrangements to avoid delay and allow contactless exit from the appointment.
- Installation of sneeze guards at the reception area.
- Employment of protocols to reduce or eliminate airborne aerosols during all dental procedures.
- Implementation of enhanced twice daily disinfection procedures of equipment and office fixtures like computers, keyboards, phones, chairs, doorknobs, and any surfaces that may be touched unconsciously.
- Disinfection of all outside mail and packages that enter the building.
- Establishment of Longer appointment times to prepare and complete all appointment tasks and duties in the safest and most comprehensive manner.
- Providing TeleDentistry services for communication / Consultation that can be done online
 - We have ensured all who work in the clinic are trained on the measures you have put in place and the policies around staying home when sick.
 - We have posted signage, including screening questions, effective [handwashing practices](#), respiratory hygiene, and the requirement to wear a mask when in our facility. Signage is also posted at the main entrance indicating that entry is only possible with appointment. Signage is also posted at front and rear indicating that if you have symptoms you are not to enter.
 - We have ensured that all workers have been trained on monitoring one another and the workplace to ensure policies and procedures are being followed.

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Monitor our workplace and update plans as needed

- Things may change as our business operates. If we identify a new area of concern, or if it seems like something isn't working, we will take steps to update our policies and procedures. We will involve workers and dentists in this process.
- We continue to ensure that workers can raise safety concerns. We have a way for workers to raise health and safety concerns at the workplace.

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We continually assess and address risks from resuming operations

Because our clinic has not been operating, there are risks arising from restarting our business that are being managed. We will be carrying out the following:

- Any new staff will be fully trained and oriented.
- All staff have been trained on any changes in office protocols.

- Office restart protocols have been carefully reviewed and special restart protocols, such as water line shock/sterilization, have been carried out.