

CMTNL Back to Work Q & A

What do I do if a client refuses to wear a mask?

Any client who refuses to follow the guidelines in place can be refused treatment. Clients do have the right to wear their own homemade mask or a medical one.

What do I do if my client informs me that they tested positive for COVID-19 after I treated them in the last 14 days?

As recommended, you should have a pandemic preparedness plan in place so that you know exactly what to do and who to contact. If you do not have a plan in place you should stop treating immediately and call 811 for guidance.

What about our insurance? Are we covered to treat?

As the College has no affiliation with your insurance provider, we can only give you general advice based on the information we have. The insurance provider has confirmed that if you return to work under direction and guidance of the Regulatory body, it is status quo. However, when it comes to the current situation with COVID-19, coverage is unknown until a claim is processed.

According to Canadian Legislation regarding other infectious diseases, an individual can only be held liable for spreading a disease if they knowingly spread a disease in which they had tested positive for the disease and /or they took no preventative measures or acted in an unethical manner.

This is the CMTNL's understanding of the legislation and not legal advice. It's the therapist's or the NLMTA's responsibility to seek legal advice.

Do I have to go back to work?

Registered Massage Therapists are not mandated to return to work. If a therapist cannot safely treat a client according to the guidelines for any reason or if they fear for the safety of their client, family or themselves, the therapist should not return to work. This is fully supported by the CMTNL and Department of Health and Community Services.

What if I don't like (or my client doesn't like) me wearing gloves. Isn't hand-washing enough?

At this point and according to the Department of Health skin on skin contact is not advised.

Are home-made masks appropriate if changed and washed after every client, the same as our scrub coats?

At this point health professionals are not recommended to wear home-made masks.

Can I refuse treatment at any time I feel a client could have been lying about having cold/flu symptoms?

You can refuse treatment to any client who arrives to your clinic with symptoms.

Can I refuse treatment to nurses in ICU or in a COVID-19 unit?

You can only refuse treatment to a client based on the screening criteria and not their field of work.

What if my client develops a runny nose during treatment?

As all of us are aware, many clients develop a runny nose due to lymphatic movement while laying supine on the table. Symptoms you should be concerned about are included in the screening guide that you have asked your client prior to arriving for treatment.

Can I treat a client for headaches even though it is one of the screening symptoms?

As an RMT you must be able to assess your client's symptoms based on their previous health history and make a professional decision to treat or not. For example, a client who has received treatments for chronic headaches or fatigue due to Fibromyalgia is not reporting a new symptom or abnormal symptom for them. Of course, you would not be able to determine this with a new client and you should follow the screening guide and refuse treatment.

Can I wash my laundry with standard cleaning procedures?

Soiled linens are to be disinfected with an appropriate recommended product.

<https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/drugs-health-products/disinfectants/covid-19/list.html>

If I have to take laundry out of the clinic will it have to be transported in a specific manner?

All soiled laundry must be stored in a sealed bag/container and handled with gloves before washing.

Should any footwear I use during treatment not be worn in a public setting to reduce cross contamination?

Therapist should use their professional judgement and decide whether it is necessary to remove any clothing or footwear that could possibly be contaminated before leaving their treatment space and returning home.

Are lotion belts/holster permitted at this time?

Anything that cannot be easily disinfected between clients should be eliminated from your treatment space including but not limited to lotion belts, heating pads, cloth covered pillows.

Can my glasses serve as protective eyewear?

No. Glasses do not fully cover and protect the eyes from droplets.

Can I check my client's temperature prior to treatment?

If you wish to request to take a client's temperature, keep in mind that it is not within your scope, so it is only a request. Clients can refuse to have their temperature taken and you cannot refuse treatment if they do so.

Why are we not recommended to treat someone in the vulnerable group?

The CMTNL believes it is ethically responsible for the college and the RMT to strongly recommend anyone in the vulnerable group to forgo treatment during this pandemic as the increased risk for them outweighs the benefit. However, clients in this group who still decide to receive treatment despite the CMTNL recommendation, would have at least heard directly from their therapist as to the risk and will then be making an informed decision.

Why should I have a risk communication and pandemic plan?

Developing a communication plan will benefit both you and your client. Clear communication with your client is imperative for your client to make an informed decision if they should receive treatment at this time and what is required of them. Your plan also allows you to reduce the chances of clients arriving too early for treatment to wait in the waiting room, entering your clinic with symptoms or not having a mask when arriving. You can plan to have

your clients wait in their cars until you call them or arrive at the exact appointment time sharp. This is your opportunity to set clear boundaries. Also consider that when there is more than one person working in the clinic there needs to be a plan regarding appointments, cleaning and social distancing.

Having a pandemic plan in case there is an outbreak will help you better manage the situation because you prepared and anticipated it, as opposed to being reactionary in the absence of one.

Why Should I only treat a limited number of clients (4) in phase 1?

The CMTNL believes that the limiting number of clients in the first phase will decrease both the number of exposed clients and therapists and will allow both, the time needed to adjust to the new guidelines.

Will I still qualify for CERB if I don't want to return to work at this time?

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Please refer to the Canada Revenue Agency's website for the most up to date information regarding CERB.

https://www.canada.ca/en/department-finance/economic-response-plan.html?utm_campaign=gc-fin-fin-covid-19economicemergplan-2021-0004-9968772463&utm_medium=search&utm_source=google-ads-100157175785&utm_content=text-en-433152654872&utm_term=cerb

For any other questions or concerns please contact the COVID Committee COVID@cmtnl.ca