

COVID-19 Pandemic Guidance

What can I expect from my Occupational Therapist?

Occupational therapists have a responsibility to contribute to practice environments that support the delivery of safe, ethical, and effective health care. This document is intended to help you understand what you can expect if you are receiving occupational therapy services during the COVID-19 pandemic.



Service

Occupational therapists provide essential health care services in many different types of locations; hospitals, rehabilitation centres, long-term care homes, community clinics, schools, research centres and in your homes and workplaces. Services may be provided by occupational therapists employed in the public health system or working in private practice. *How* services are provided and *when* services are provided will depend on many considerations during the pandemic. Occupational therapists will work with you to develop a service plan to best meet your needs based on:

- Telehealth / virtual care options and abilities – by phone, video, and/or email
- In-person risks – with/without physical distancing, use of indoor/outdoor spaces
- Combination of care – using both virtual and in-person services
- Urgency of your care needs – prioritization of services

Safety

Occupational therapists are expected to follow the recommendations and requirements set by many public health organizations and their employers. Occupational therapists are required to know current, accurate information related to the COVID-19 virus and must apply safety measures to their practice. Examples of safety measures you may consider asking about include:

- What COVID-19 screening procedures are in place for everyone using the practice space?
- What types of personal protective equipment (e.g., masks, gowns, gloves, face shields) might need to be used during my therapy sessions and why?
- What hand hygiene supplies are available so that everyone in the practice space can wash/sanitize their hands before, during and after services?
- What cleaning supplies are being used and how frequently are surfaces being cleaned?

Support

Occupational therapists support health care delivery in many different ways. They can work on their own or as part of an interprofessional care team. In developing your occupational therapy goals during this pandemic, you and your occupational therapist will work together to develop a plan to address your care needs. This happens best through clear and honest communication. Some questions you may want to consider asking as you develop your occupational therapy plan include:

- What do I do if I don't feel well? Who do I contact?
- If I have concerns about my safety, how will those be addressed?
- What are all of my occupational therapy assessment and treatment plan options?

- How will my health care team communicate with each other to coordinate my care?
- Will other team members be involved in my occupational therapy service plan (i.e. rehabilitation assistants, kinesiologists, etc.)? How are they supervised and supported?
- If I am on a waitlist for services, what do I do if my needs change or become more urgent?
- Who should I contact if I have other questions about my care? What is the best way to reach them?

We all have a responsibility to do our part to reduce the spread of COVID-19. Remember to stay home if you are sick, avoid crowded places, keep 2 metres apart from others whenever you can, consider wearing a face mask, take care of your mental well-being, cough/sneeze into your elbow or sleeve and wash your hands regularly.

Don't Hesitate to Contact Us

If you have any questions or concerns about an occupational therapist's practice, the College can be reached at:

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Be Calm, Be Kind, Be Safe.

The College of Occupational Therapists of BC (COTBC) is the governing body responsible for regulating the practice of occupational therapy in BC under the Health Professions Act and the Occupational Therapists Regulation. All occupational therapists who practise in BC must be registered with the College.