

COVID-19 Practice Guidance April 6, 2022



Guidance from Dr. Bonnie Henry, Provincial Health Officer, regarding Mask Use and Infection Prevention & Control for Health Professionals

Following BC's Public Health Officer's (PHO) announcement of the ease of restrictions, on April 1, 2022, the PHO issued [guidance](#) for all health regulatory colleges, including COTBC, regarding the use of masks. The guidance is focused on health professionals who work in **non-health authority** settings; existing masking requirements in health authority settings remain in place.

The PHO recommends the use of medical masks by both the occupational therapist and client in practice settings where there is close, in-person client/occupational therapist contact.

Dr. Henry's latest guidance offers clarity on expectations for health care providers moving forward so that registrants may meet the expectations of clients and keep everyone safe, including the following paragraph:

"In addition to following masking requirements established by employers and operators as part of their workplace communicable disease plans, I recommend the continued use of medical masks by practitioners and patients/clients in medical offices, private practices and other settings when there is close, in-person patient/client contact."

The wearing of masks is recommended by the PHO, but it is not mandatory. Decisions regarding mask use in the practice environment should be based on screening for COVID-19 risks, completion of a [point of care risk assessment](#) and in the context of the infection prevention and control measures that are in place.

The PHO guidance continues to reinforce the importance of comprehensive infection prevention and exposure control strategies including: "diligent hand washing, immunization, respecting personal space, regular cleaning and disinfection, ensuring appropriate ventilation and staying home when sick". Occupational therapists should continue to use their professional judgment regarding the use of masks, taking into consideration the PHO's recommendation for medical mask use, and any masking requirements established by an employer as part of a workplace communicable disease plan.

Please note that these expectations are subject to change at any time and registrants are encouraged to monitor [WorkSafeBC](#) and [BC Centre for Disease Control](#) information regarding infection control best practices.

Be Calm, Be Kind, Be Safe.