

COVID-19 OPERATIONAL PLAN FOR THE PRACTICE OF DENTISTRY IN THE PROVINCE OF NEW BRUNSWICK (NBDS Operational Plan)

Introduction

On March 17, 2020 the New Brunswick Dental Society advised its members, public, government and malpractice insurer of a strong recommendation that dentistry be restricted to emergency care.

On March 19, 2020 the Province of New Brunswick (PNB) declared a state of emergency under section 12 of the *Emergency Measures Act* to enhance measures to help contain the spread of COVID-19 (the novel coronavirus).

All Regulated Health Professionals, including dentists, were ordered to only provide “services they deem essential for the health and wellbeing of their clients”. New Brunswick Dentists, following PNB’s Order, restricted practice to emergency care for patients. This restriction was lifted on May 8, 2020 on condition of an Operational Plan.

This NBDS Operational Plan has been adopted by the Board of Directors and provides mandatory regulatory requirements (**must**) and recommended best practices (**should**). **This plan supplements the Infection Prevention and Control Guidelines of the New Brunswick Dental Society.**

This NBDS Operational Plan respects the minimum statutory requirements of the Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health (CMOH) in its “Guidance Document of General Public Health Measures During COVID-19 Recovery.” (PNB Guidance Appendix A) and contemplates measures for dentistry until the end of this State of Emergency. NBDS requires each Clinic to maintain a printed copy of the Operational Plan signed by each Dentist and staff which must be accompanied with fit tested respiratory mask certifications.

This operational plan has been revised as of November 2020 and has been informed by current best practices and the best available evidence. Where professional consensus is lacking or the available evidence is unclear, the NBDS’ guidance takes a precautionary approach that prioritizes the safety and well-being of patients, staff, the broader public, and dentists.

Objectives

- Confirm the obligations of dentists and staff with respect to PNB’s Guidance; and
- Confirm the NBDS Guidance until the Green Phase of New Brunswick’s Reopening.

Province of New Brunswick Guidance

PNB’s Guidance document includes the minimum public health measures that must be observed, including:

- A Written Operational Plan.
- The mandatory use of community masks.
- Physical distancing (2 meter / 6 feet).
- Frequent hand washing.
- Cleaning surfaces properly.

NBDS OPERATIONAL PLAN

GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

- Dentists **must** thoroughly review and explain the current NBDS Operational Plan, and the Infection Prevention and Control Guidelines with all staff.
- Dentists **must** confirm posting of signage relating to proper hand hygiene, respiratory hygiene, and physical distancing in common areas such as waiting rooms and washrooms.
 - Screening Questionnaire (**Appendix A**)
 - Hand Washing Poster
 - Hand Sanitizer Poster
 - Protect Yourself and Others from Getting Sick Poster
 - Physical Distancing Poster
 - Mandatory Mask Poster
- Masks **must** be worn in the office
- Dentists **must** place hand sanitizer at entryway.
- Dentists **should** conduct an inventory of available personal protective equipment (PPE) supplies.
- Dentists **should** remove any other non-essential items from waiting areas and operatories.
- Dentists **should**, where possible, place markers throughout the clinic and reception area to indicate where patients are to stand to interact with administrative staff to maintain physical distancing.
- Clinics **should** place a transparent barrier at the reception desk to enhance separation between staff and patients during transactions
- Clinics **should** provide closed laundry/waste bins for disposal of used PPE
- Clinics **should** arrange for laundry service or provide facilities to launder scrubs on-site.

GENERAL STAFF REQUIREMENTS

- Staff **must** self-monitor for COVID-19 symptoms before reporting to work each day
- Staff **must** be pre-screened at the beginning of each shift using the *Dental Office Staff Daily Screening Form* (**Appendix B**).
- Staff **must** not wear scrubs to/from work.
- Staff **must** follow prescribed sequence re: donning and removing PPE (educational video available on the NBDS website, **Appendix C**).
- Breaks **should** be staggered to respect physical distancing requirements.
- Staff **should** disinfect parcel deliveries and surfaces they contact.

PRE-SCREENING AND SCHEDULING

- Clinics **must** interview patients prior to appointment re:
 - Exhibiting COVID-19 symptoms *and risk factors* in past two weeks using *Screening Questionnaire for COVID-19 (Appendix A posted at entry)*; and
 - A *Patient Screening Form* **must** also be completed (**Appendix D**) and patients may be advised of protocols they can expect on arrival.
- Patients who report symptoms and/or have been advised by Public Health to self-isolate, **must not** be booked for treatment until they have been asymptomatic for 14 days.
- Appointments **should** be scheduled with sufficient time between appointments to minimize the potential for contact with other patients.
- Vulnerable patients **should** be scheduled at the beginning of the day.

PATIENT ARRIVAL PROTOCOL

- Patients **should** be advised to contact the clinic and wait for screening and entry instructions.
- If screening reveals signs or symptoms of Covid-19, **unless it is a dental emergency**, the appointment **must** be deferred for a minimum of 14 days, and the patient **must** be advised to call Tele-Care 811 or call their primary healthcare provider.
- Patients **must** attend their appointments alone unless circumstances require assistance (e.g. child) at which point one other guest may attend.
- Accompanying guests **must** be screened in the same manner as patients.
- All persons **must** be wearing a mask upon entering the clinic / or **must** be provided a mask upon entry.
- All persons **must** sanitize/wash hands immediately upon entering the clinic.
- Staff **should** accompany patient throughout the clinic to minimize touching of surfaces.

During Dental Care

In addition to NBDS infection control guidelines, the following transmission-based precautions are to be implemented into usual clinical protocols during the COVID-19 crisis:

GENERAL PRECAUTIONS FOR NON-AEROSOL GENERATING PROCEDURES

- Surgical masks, eye protection and/or face shield, gloves **must** be worn.
- Patients **should** rinse with an antiseptic mouthwash, as prescribed
- Use of air/water syringe **should** be minimized

GENERAL PRECAUTIONS FOR AEROSOL GENERATING PROCEDURES

Aerosols are produced by the use of high speed handpieces, ultrasonic and sonic scaler, air polishing, air-water syringe, and air abrasion.

- Eye protection and face shield and gloves **must** be worn for all AGP
- Fit-tested N95 or equivalent respirator as per Appendix F, **or** ASTM level 3 or 2 surgical masks **must** be worn
- Lab coats or gowns and head bonnets **should** be worn.
- High-volume evacuators **must** be utilized.
- Patients **should** rinse with an antiseptic mouthwash, as prescribed.
- Dental dams **should** be used where possible.
- Use of air/water syringe **should** be minimized.
- Four-handed dentistry **should** be used where possible.

PATIENTS WHO SCREEN POSITIVE

Patients who have screened positive **should** be rescheduled. If the appointment cannot be deferred, treatment **should** be conducted in an enclosed treatment room with floor to ceiling walls or barriers and a door. If not possible, these patients **must** be scheduled at the end of the day or when other patients and non-essential staff are not present in the defined treatment area. Fallow times **should** be respected based on the air changes per hour for your office setting.

PATIENTS WHO TEST POSITIVE

For patients who are positive for Covid-19, in-person treatment **must** be deferred unless it is a life-threatening emergency. Patient assessment **must** take place remotely as a first line of care. Dentists are responsible for patient's dental care plan. (e.g. Prescription medication; referral to specialist; treatment within a hospital setting or treatment within your offices adhering to the same infection control guidelines and using enhanced PPE as outlined in the "Patients Who Screen Positive" section.)

In addition to general precautions listed above, a fit tested N95 respirator (or equivalent as per Appendix F), gowns, head bonnets, face shield and eye protection, gloves **must** be worn.

Public Health Identified Zones of moderate to high rates of community transmission

Where Public Health has identified a community as a moderate to high risk transmission area, detailed screening will dictate which of the required protocols must be followed. However, a fit-tested N95 respirator (or equivalent as per Appendix F), gowns, head bonnets, face shield and eye protection, gloves are strongly recommended for all patients in this zone.

CLEARING THE AIR – FALLOW TIME

- Air changes per hour can be impacted by many factors, including physical layout of clinic, ventilation systems, height of ceiling, and the presence of windows etc. This Operational Plan specifically does not address the clearing of air or ventilation systems or time in between aerosol generating procedures. Dentists **should** consult with their HVAC ventilation professionals to determine optimal settings and best practices. (**Appendix E** – Standard Reference “air changes per hour” CDC).

PATIENT DISMISSAL

- Patients **must** put their mask back on.
- Patients and guests **must** sanitize/wash hands immediately before exiting the operatories and clinic.
- Patients **should** make payments using debit or credit cards.

SANITIZATION

- Appoint a staff person responsible for Infection Control (Covid-19) per PNB Guidance document.
- Disinfect debit machines after each use.
- Clean and disinfect touch surfaces and common areas throughout the office frequently.
- Regularly disinfect reception desk, including transparent barrier if present.

END OF DAY

- Thoroughly clean and disinfect all surfaces, and clean floors.
- Discard all disposable PPE using standard waste procedure.
- Staff must change from scrubs and work shoes into personal clothing before leaving the clinic.

EXPOSURE TO COVID-19

In the event of suspected exposure to COVID-19 staff should immediately self-isolate, advise employer and call Tele-Care 811 for further direction. **In all instances of suspected exposure to Covid-19, clinics will follow the advice of Public Health.**

Acknowledged by Dentist and Office Staff below that this is the Operational Plan for this clinic.

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Appendix A

ATTENTION



If you answer **'YES'** to any of the following questions, **DO NOT ENTER** this building. Please return home and self-isolate.

- Do you have **TWO (2)** of the following symptoms that are not related to a known pre-existing health condition (i.e., seasonal allergies)? If **YES**, you should be tested for COVID-19.



Fever



Cough (or worsening cough)



Diarrhea



Loss of sense of smell and taste



In children, purple markings on the fingers and toes



Runny nose



Sore throat



Muscle pain



Headache



Fatigue/
exhaustion

- Have you been advised by Public Health, a health-care provider or a peace officer that you are currently required to self-isolate?
- Are you waiting for a COVID-19 test or COVID-19 test results **AND** have been told you need to self-isolate?
- Have you travelled outside of the Atlantic bubble in the past 14 days (unless exempt from self-isolation)?
- Has an individual in your household returned from outside of the Atlantic bubble in the past 14 days for any reason, and now someone within the household has developed one or more symptoms of COVID-19 as listed above?

If you answered **'NO'** to the above questions,
YOU MAY ENTER the facility.

If you are experiencing any symptoms, you should get tested. You can register for a test online by clicking 'Get tested' on the GNB Coronavirus website, calling Tele-Care 811 or by contacting your primary health-care provider.

Appendix B

Dental Office Staff Daily Screening Form

All dental office staff must confirm their absence of symptoms and have temperature taken each day. If symptoms are present, further investigation is needed by the managing dentist.

Name:		Signature:		
• Fever > 38° C	YES NO	• Difficulty breathing	YES NO	AM Temperature _____
• Cough	YES NO	• Flu-like symptoms	YES NO	
• Sore throat	YES NO	• Runny nose	YES NO	PM Temperature _____
• Shortness of breath	YES NO			

Name:		Signature:		
• Fever > 38° C	YES NO	• Difficulty breathing	YES NO	AM Temperature _____
• Cough	YES NO	• Flu-like symptoms	YES NO	
• Sore throat	YES NO	• Runny nose	YES NO	PM Temperature _____
• Shortness of breath	YES NO			

Name:		Signature:		
• Fever > 38° C	YES NO	• Difficulty breathing	YES NO	AM Temperature _____
• Cough	YES NO	• Flu-like symptoms	YES NO	
• Sore throat	YES NO	• Runny nose	YES NO	PM Temperature _____
• Shortness of breath	YES NO			

Name:		Signature:		
• Fever > 38° C	YES NO	• Difficulty breathing	YES NO	AM Temperature _____
• Cough	YES NO	• Flu-like symptoms	YES NO	
• Sore throat	YES NO	• Runny nose	YES NO	PM Temperature _____
• Shortness of breath	YES NO			

Name:		Signature:		
• Fever > 38° C	YES NO	• Difficulty breathing	YES NO	AM Temperature _____
• Cough	YES NO	• Flu-like symptoms	YES NO	
• Sore throat	YES NO	• Runny nose	YES NO	PM Temperature _____
• Shortness of breath	YES NO			

Name:		Signature:		
• Fever > 38° C	YES NO	• Difficulty breathing	YES NO	AM Temperature _____
• Cough	YES NO	• Flu-like symptoms	YES NO	
• Sore throat	YES NO	• Runny nose	YES NO	PM Temperature _____
• Shortness of breath	YES NO			

Name:		Signature:		
• Fever > 38° C	YES NO	• Difficulty breathing	YES NO	AM Temperature _____
• Cough	YES NO	• Flu-like symptoms	YES NO	
• Sore throat	YES NO	• Runny nose	YES NO	PM Temperature _____
• Shortness of breath	YES NO			

Appendix C

Donning & Doffing of PPE

Donning of PPE:

If at anytime you feel you have made an error, please use hand hygiene techniques and wash areas you feel may have been exposed

Begin by checking which procedures are being done on this patient to see which PPE is required.

Hair should be pulled back and jewellery should be removed or minimized.

Perform hand hygiene for at least 20 seconds, rubbing palms, wrists, in between fingers, back of hands and along the nail beds.

Don gown by first closing the back of the neck. Tie waist ensuring all clothing is covered.

Donning N95 mask:

Place fit-tested N95 mask over nose and under chin. Place top strap at crown of head. Stretch bottom strap to back of neck. Mould the nose strip to ensure fit and tight seal. Perform a seal test by putting hands at top and bottom of mask while breathing out to feel if any air escapes.

For droplet contact precautions, secure eye protection and face shield.

Put on gloves one at a time, making sure they are snug over the sleeve of the gown, ensuring no skin is exposed.

Doffing of PPE

Remove the first glove by pulling it up and away from middle of your palm turning the glove inside out. Hold the entire glove in the other hand. To remove other glove place a finger inside the glove pushing it off wrapping it inside out, balling up both gloves together and throwing into garbage. Remove the gown by opening at the neck and then untying at the waist. From the back of the neck, pull the gown away from you. Only touch the inside of the gown and roll it into a ball. Throw it into garbage. Perform hand hygiene for 15 – 20 seconds. Remove face shield by pulling strap and shield away from you. Remove N95 mask by pulling straps away from you and pulling mask off dropping into garbage. Perform hand hygiene again for 15 – 20 seconds.

When doffing a procedure mask, pull elastics away from ears, release from chin and drop into garbage.

- Disposable PPE should be disposed of within the operatory.
- Reusable PPE should be left in the operatory and be disinfected along with the operatory or sterilized.
- Glasses and face shields are to be cleaned and disinfected between each patient.

For teaching videos please visit this site from Vitalité Health Network

English

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL7ApdZUkX0i1FvICbDTNI9UviDYP2xTJK>

French <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL7ApdZUkX0i0rAuVFOVc2UCeTaPANNFTd>

Appendix D

Screening questions

Pre-Screen

In-Office

1: Do you have TWO (2) of the following symptoms that are not related to a known pre-existing condition:

A fever anytime in the last two weeks? Cough? Sore throat?

Runny nose? Diarrhea? Headache? Loss of smell/taste?

Fatigue/exhaustion? Muscle pain?

Children: Any purple markings on fingers/toes?

YES NO

YES NO

Patient temperature at appointment: _____

2: Have you been advised by Public Health, a health care provider or a peace officer that you are currently required to self-isolate?

YES NO

YES NO

3: Are you waiting for a Covid-19 test or Covid-19 test results AND have been told you need to self-isolate?

YES NO

YES NO

4: Have you travelled outside of the province within the last 14 days? (unless exempt from self-isolation)?

YES NO

YES NO

5: Has an individual in your household returned from outside of the province in past 14 days for any reason, and now someone within the household has developed one or more symptoms of Covid-19 as listed above?

YES NO

YES NO

6: Do you have any of the following? Heart disease, lung disease, kidney disease, diabetes or any auto-immune disorder?

YES NO

YES NO

The patient **should** be rescheduled and/or denied entry to your office and advised to visit the Government of NB Coronavirus website, call 811 or contact their primary health provider if they:

- A) Answer YES to any two symptoms in question 1,
- B) Have a recorded fever above 38 degrees Celsius ,OR
- C) Answer Yes to any question 2 through 5

Appendix E

Air Changes / hour (ACH) and time required for airborne contaminant removal by efficiency

ACH	Time (mins.) required for removal 99% efficiency	Time (mins.) required for removal 99.9% efficiency
2	138	207
4	69	104
6 ⁺	46	69
8	35	52
10 ⁺	28	41
12 ⁺	23	35
15 ⁺	18	28
20	14	21
50	6	8

+ Denotes frequently cited ACH for patient-care areas.

<https://www.cdc.gov/infectioncontrol/guidelines/environmental/appendix/air.html#tableb1>

Appendix F

List of equivalent N-95 mask respirators:

From the US Center for Disease Control:

There are ten classes of NIOSH-approved particulate filtering respirators available at this time. 95% is the minimal level of filtration approved by NIOSH. The N, R, and P designations refer to the filter's oil resistance as described in the table below.

Ten classes of NIOSH-approved particulate filtering respirators available

Filter Class	Description
N95, N99, N100	Filters at least 95%, 99%, 99.97% of airborne particles. Not resistant to oil.
R95, R99, R100	Filters at least 95%, 99%, 99.97% of airborne particles. Somewhat resistant to oil.
P95, P99, P100	Filters at least 95%, 99%, 99.97% of airborne particles. Strongly resistant to oil.
HE (High Efficiency Particulate Air)	Filters at least 99.97% of airborne particles. For use on PAPRs only. PAPRs use only HE filters.

For more information visit the CDC website:

https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/nppt/topics/respirators/disp_part/respsource1quest2.html

Strategies for Optimizing the Supply of N95 Respirators

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/respirators-strategy/index.html>

References:

Mandatory signage:

WorkSafeNB https://www2.gnb.ca/content/dam/gnb/Departments/h-s/pdf/COVID-19_screeningEN.pdf

Self-Monitor <https://www2.gnb.ca/content/dam/gnb/Departments/h-s/pdf/Self-Monitor.pdf>

How to self-isolate <https://www2.gnb.ca/content/dam/gnb/Departments/h-s/pdf/Self-Isolate.pdf>

Hand washing <https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/phac-aspc/documents/services/publications/diseases-conditions/coronavirus/covid-19-handwashing/covid-19-handwashing-eng.pdf>

Hand sanitizer <https://www2.gnb.ca/content/dam/gnb/Departments/h-s/pdf/SanitizerDesinfectant.pdf>

Resources <https://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/corporate/promo/covid-19/resources.html>

Cleaning & disinfecting <https://www2.gnb.ca/content/dam/gnb/Departments/h-s/pdf/CDCOVIDE.pdf>

Public Health posters <https://www2.gnb.ca/content/dam/gnb/Departments/h-s/pdf/en/CDC/PosterCL.pdf>

PNB Guidance Document:

https://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/corporate/promo/covid-19/publichealth_guidance.html

WorkSafeNB Guidelines <https://www.worksafenb.ca/media/61014/covid-19-operational-plan-for-workplaces-template.pdf>

Advice for Businesses

https://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/gateways/for_business/covid19.html

Mandatory Masks FAQ

<https://www2.gnb.ca/content/dam/gnb/Departments/eco-bce/Promo/covid-19/MandatoryMasksFAQ.pdf>

Mandatory Mask Poster https://www2.gnb.ca/content/dam/gnb/Departments/eco-bce/Promo/covid-19/masks_poster_enter.pdf