



SDHA

Saskatchewan Dental
Hygienists' Association

SDHA COVID-19 Pandemic IPC Interim Protocol *Updated*

Effective: July 11th 2021

Approved by the SDHA Council
Protocol subject to change

All SDHA members are required to abide by this protocol during the COVID-19 global pandemic.

***** Dental Hygienist are to remind clients that the global pandemic has not been lifted and the additional requirements in this protocol (example, Mask use in office) are for the health of the client and the provider. *****

SDHA registrants are expected to follow the most current guidance. Those who fail to abide by this directive may be considered to be in professional misconduct and will be subject to appropriate action by the SDHA.

Introduction:

The SDHA COVID-19 Interim IPC Protocol was developed using the best available evidence to reduce transmission risk for of the SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19). The currently available evidence suggests that complete elimination of risk is not possible. By implementing risk mitigating strategies outlined in this document, Dental Hygienists can reduce the impact of the known risks in their practice to protect themselves and their clients from infection. **The updated protocol is based on the threshold of vaccinated population being met** and should only to be applied to the COVID-19 asymptomatic client. This document does not replace regular standards of care, professional advice, application of clinical judgement or [ethical decision-making](#).

For employment and insurance questions related to returning to work, Dental Hygienists can refer to the [CDHA Employment Legal Line](#), [Saskatchewan Labor Standards](#), [Worksafe Saskatchewan](#), [Government of SK Workplace Information](#), or Occupational Health & Safety. Dental Hygienists are reminded that the CDHA also provides access to social and mental health supports which may be useful to some during this stressful time.

SDHA Rationale for Updated Protocol:

- **The province enters Step Three of Saskatchewan's Re-Opening Roadmap**
- **SDHA supports the Government of Saskatchewan's Vaccine Strategy and therefore the lifting of restrictions for the fully vaccinated (+2 weeks)**
- Members are required to use profession and clinical judgement in providing dental hygiene care
- Members are required to stay vigilant in response to COVID -19

SDHA Objective:

- Safety for clients, families, and communities
- Safety for dental hygienists, team members, and their families
- **Ensure SDHA members have guided resources for decision making during a global pandemic.**

SDHA Member Responsibility:

- Ensure up-to-date IPC facility manual includes the most current SDHA COVID-19 Pandemic IPC Interim Protocol.
- **Ensure appropriate PPE is accessible should protocols revert to previous requirements**
- Utilize clinical judgement when determining risk versus health benefit
- Continue to abide by [The Dental Disciplines Act](#), [SDHA Regulatory Bylaws](#), [SDHA Administrative Bylaws](#), [Infection Prevention and Control Standards](#), and all additional SDHA updates relating to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Before Returning to Practice:

- Dental Hygienists are required to self-monitor when determining fitness to practice. Should a member present with any signs or symptoms of COVID-19 as outlined by Saskatchewan Health Authorities they are required to contact the HealthLine 811 for further instruction and inform their employer.
- Communicate with dental team to ensure safety precautions are understood

Risk Mitigating Factors Ongoing throughout COVID-19 Pandemic:

- Clients should be pre-screened by telephone
- Assess temperature using a thermometer (<38°C) on each client prior to procedures
- Pre-screening should be confirmed on the arrival of appointment.
- Recommend dental hygienist and clients be masked at all times, excluding when client is receiving care, ie. Entry and exit of the facility
- Have visible reminders for clients to maintain physical distancing, proper cough and respiratory etiquette, and hand hygiene.
- Clients are to perform hand hygiene upon entry and exit of dental facility and operatory
- Use of a pre-procedural antiviral mouth rinse

Low - Risk Aerosol Generating Procedures:

- Mandatory routine precautions as per the SOHP Infection Prevention Control Standard for Oral Health Care Facilities

High-Risk Aerosol Generating Procedures

During the COVID-19 pandemic, procedures considered high-risk for aerosol production should be performed with caution:

HVE is required for all high-risk AGP.

Including: proper HVE device (8mm opening), proper positioning of HVE device and proper main vacuum unit

Procedures Include:

- Air-water syringe used in combination
- Ultrasonic/power instrumentation
- Air polishing
- Selective polishing/prophy

If choosing to selective polish, ensure there is a clear health benefit for the client. Utilize HVE to control splatter, droplets and potential aerosols.

PPE Requirement for High-Risk AGP:

- N95 Respirator as recommended by SHA or;
- Level 3 ASTM
- Eye protection: face shield with side protection (may be worn in conjunction with safety glasses, safety goggles, or magnification loupes)
- Gloves
- Long-sleeved disposable gown OR lab coat extending from the neck to the lap while sitting and MUST be changed between clients
- Surgical cap/bonnet
- Shoe coverings (optional)

***** Aerosol Control Environments (ACE) are no longer required but recommended for risk of the spread of Variants of Concern (VoC), further waves of COVID-19 and/or unvaccinated individuals *****

***** Utilizing the minimum level of PPE and ACE outlined in this document may not eliminate the need to self-isolation. Saskatchewan Public Health is responsible for determining the outcomes of an exposure, professional judgment is required. *****