



The Simple Guide to Practicing Homeopathy during the Pandemic



Advice and Resources to Support Safe Practice and Ongoing Access to Care

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A Message from the Registrar

In a time when the whole world has changed, homeopaths are facing a number of unique challenges. It has been inspiring to watch individual practitioners cope in the most creative ways to keep their practises open while ensuring safe, continuous and effective care for their patients.

All Health Colleges are subject to Ministry and Government directives. Our College recognizes the truth, “we’re all weathering the same storm, but we’re not all in the same boat.” Every College is unique and has different constraints placed upon them depending on their scope of practice. To the extent possible given its mandate to protect the public, our College is determined to support homeopaths and their patients in whatever ways it can.

There is no reason why homeopaths cannot adapt to the changed environment and become expert not only in their own profession but also in the implementation of their trade through remote practice. I encourage Associations to provide marketing, promotional, educational, strategic and moral support to get through these difficult times.

The CHO has collected and developed a wide array of resources to help you meet the challenges you face during the COVID-19 crisis. Use them as your guide to practice safely and in ways that recognize new legal requirements. It may be that some of the changes put in place now will become permanent, either by law or because you and your patients find the new way of doing things is better. It’s easy to see the hardships inherent in change, but it’s much more important to recognize the opportunities in front of you.

The core beliefs and primary obligations of our members have not changed. These have always been and will always be there to function as a framework for primary care health providers – even when the conditions under which they must be met have become turbulent.

Basil Ziv Hom
Registrar & CEO

Key Challenges

There is no doubt that the pandemic has added challenges to our lives. In the context of providing health care services, these challenges include:

- Continuing to provide care to your existing patients as well as to recognize the need for essential and urgent care for new patients
- Supporting your patients and assuring them that the human element of compassion will not be lost during these remote contacts
- Implementing remote practice techniques as the first line for patient access
- Educating patients about the availability and advantage of remote services and necessary changes in procedures (including reducing the need to travel to appointments)
- Providing in-person essential and urgent care by following CHO and Ministry COVID directives for ensuring patient and practitioner safety
- Making homeopathic medicines available through drop boxes located at practitioner offices, by mail, and/or third-party delivery

There are resources available to help you cope with each of these challenges. Please make use of them so challenges don’t become obstacles to providing necessary patient care.

Key Points from the CHO Standards and Guidelines

Any time a homeopath is providing health care services to a patient, the professional standards and guidelines developed by the College must be adhered to. The stakes are high in this time of public health crisis, and so is the scrutiny. In particular, you should refresh your understanding of rules related to:

Advertising (including websites): cannot include claims of cure or testimonials, or treating a disease

Informed Consent: must be obtained regardless of practice setting (that is, in person AND online)

Privacy: must be respected and protected regardless of practice setting and/or changes to the way care is delivered

Infection Control: must be enhanced to recognize the highly contagious nature of this virus

Diagnosis: cannot be communicated to a patient by a homeopath

How to Practice Remotely

Before making decisions about offering virtual care, ask yourself:

- Is there an urgent need to see the patient for an in-person visit? If not, provide care remotely. Reasons that an in-person visit might be necessary include:
 - The patient's condition is difficult or very challenging to assess remotely.
 - The patient may need to have privacy away from their home environment to fully discuss their symptoms and situation.
 - The need for care – physical, mental or emotional – is urgent.
- Are there any physical, cognitive or sensory deficits that may make virtual practice unsafe or ineffective for the specific patient you are preparing to see?
- Are you able to protect the safety of your patient's personal health information?
- Are you able to deal with patient medical emergencies, failure of the communication technology or the patient's technology limitations?

Guiding Principles

- ❖ Homeopaths must follow all directions and guidance provided by Ontario's Chief Medical Officer of Health (CMOH) and the Ontario Ministry of Health. Guidance from the Ministry of Health and CMOH overrules anything that may be in this document.
- ❖ Services that can be provided safely and effectively by remote means should be.
- ❖ In-person services must only proceed when the anticipated benefits of such services outweigh the risks to the patient and the homeopath.

Remote Practice Checklist

- Set up for video and/or telephone conferencing.
 - Set up an account if needed. Options include Skype, Zoom, and Microsoft Office 365 for Business. Another alternative is Facetime, which is included with most current phones and iPads. Some of these options are free. Free, however, is not always the best option, especially when your patient's privacy is involved. Whatever you choose, ensure that you have the most recent version with enhanced cyber security protection. Purchased accounts may provide the added and needed security.
 - Ensure you are using an encrypted connection (check availability with your service provider).
 - Check out online tutorials to get an understanding how to function and troubleshoot.
 - Provide patients with instructions about how to join you for a video call.
 - Choose a secure, quiet, private environment free from interruptions.

- Set up a way for patients to pay you, i.e. Square, Paypal or e-transfer

- Set up one or more ways to get remedies to patients. Options could include:
 - providing patients with a list of retail or online purchase sources.
 - using a reliable mail or courier delivery service. Canada Post, like all businesses, has been impacted by delays due to COVID. If you choose courier, it is appropriate to charge delivery costs back to your patient.
 - setting up curbside pick-up in one or more drop box locations. Be sure to remember to clean the boxes between each pick-up.

- Add appointment booking instructions to your clinic voice mail, website and/or Facebook page.

- Set up a way for patients to receive and return necessary documents. For example, documents can be emailed or posted on your website or Facebook page. Get technical help where necessary. Include forms for:
 - [informed consent to collect information remotely](#)
 - informed consent for treatment
 - patient intake
 - brochure

- Provide patients with clear directions on what is required from them prior to the visit. Items might include:
 - A brochure in electronic form answering the following questions:
 - what is homeopathy? - basic principles and process
 - the nature and safety of homeopathic medicines
 - the difference between acute and chronic treatment
 - treatment expectations
 - duration and frequency of visits
 - the fact that homeopaths are part of a regulated health profession
 - instructions how to take homeopathic medicines and how to store them
 - how remedies will be administered or provided and any additional costs
 - how to use video conferencing, what options are available
 - how to find, complete and return required forms
 - appointment and treatment expectations (including cancellation policy and fee schedule)
 - fee schedule, payment policy and details on how payment will be processed.

- Get the help you need to properly set up your remote practice. This might mean lining up reliable delivery services to get the required homeopathic medicines to patients or to facilitate curbside or drop box delivery.

- If needed, get IT support to update your website or ensure that your computer is safe and secure.
- Download the latest malware and cyber security protection on your computer and/or cell phone to ensure patient records and data are safe and secure.
- Ensure you maintain patient files in a secure and confidential manner. Follow the College's Professional Practice Guideline #1 [Record Keeping and Privacy of Information](#).
- Update your invoices in ensure they specify you provided virtual treatment.

How to See Patients in Person (if you must)

Certain patients or conditions will require in-person visits and should not be deferred (e.g., pregnant women, infections, wound management).

Screening

- Primary care providers should post information on their clinic website or send an email to all patients advising them to call prior to coming to the office/clinic.
- There must be a notice at the entrance of the clinic as to the required procedure to be followed by each person entering the clinic.
- All primary care settings should screen patients in advance by telephone and, if an in-person visit is necessary, upon arrival at the clinic.
- If an in-person visit is required, patients should be advised to wear their own cloth mask to the office/clinic if they have one available to them. Alternatively, you may provide a suitable mask to your patient.
- The homeopath, having screened the patient, should wear appropriate protective clothing and gloves if physical exam is deemed necessary. Physical distancing should be observed as circumstances dictate.

In-Person Care and Essential Visits

- Ensure you have and use appropriate [personal protective equipment \(PPE\)](#).
- As a homeopath, you can decide whether you absolutely need to see the patient in person. Even if an in-person visit is needed, do as much as you can virtually in order to minimize the in-person time required (e.g., an essential prenatal visit could be divided into a virtual discussion along with a brief in-person physical assessment).
- Minimize the need for patients to wait in the waiting room (e.g., by spreading out appointments, having each patient stay outside the clinic until the examination room is ready for them and then call in, by phone preferably).
- Reduce the number of examination rooms being used, and sanitize rooms after each visit).
- Minimize staff in the office/clinic. Consider which tasks can be done from home or outside of regular hours to minimize staff interactions with each other and patients.
- Clean high-touch surfaces and facilities after the patient leaves and employ enhanced infection control measures.

How to Get Ready to Resume Once Restrictions are Lifted (in full or in part)

- Set pre-screening protocols to prioritize patient appointments.
- Determine which screening procedures will be implemented and must be in place when treating COVID-19-positive patients. Decide whether temperature checks will be conducted when the patient arrives (recognizing a lack of fever does not confirm that no COVID-19 is present) and what procedure will be followed if a patient does present with a fever or other COVID-19 symptoms. Ensure that the patient has been reported to public health officials.
- Decide whether there will be a limit on the number of people accompanying a patient and whether a limit will be placed on the number of individuals who can enter the practice environment at the same time.
- Determine how you will manage the flow of individuals in and out of the practice environment. For example, will waiting rooms be used or will patients be asked to remain outside (e.g., in vehicle) until notified?
- Remove waiting room materials, e.g., products, magazines, pamphlets, toys.
- Arrange/organize waiting rooms so they satisfy physical distancing measures (e.g., spacing chairs, etc.).
- Ask patients to wear masks. Determine what type will be required and whether you will provide them to patients.
- Have patients wash or sanitize their hands upon entry and set up your facility to allow this to take place as simply as possible.
- Post signs about screening, infection control procedures, office rules, and expectations.
- Determine which cleaning/disinfecting measures will be taken upon each patient's arrival and departure.
- Set up a cleaning schedule and a way to record the times and specific areas in the facility/clinic that were sanitized.
- Define which areas of the practice will be unavailable to patients.
- Ensure that procedures are in place so that staff (this includes the practitioner) do not come to work sick, e.g., taking temperature prior to coming to the office and answering a check list of questions.
- Schedule appointments to prevent or reduce patient interaction. Determine how patients will be separated to ensure physical distancing is maintained.
- Determine how staff will be separated from patients and each other, what face coverings will be required at which contact points, and what physical changes need to be made to allow for physical distancing.
- Adapt form completion and payment processes to reduce physical contact (e.g., tap or e-transfer).
- Maintain a list of all visitors, including patients, vendors, staff, etc., to aid in contact tracing should there be a confirmed infection, including the time of entry and departure.

Considerations for Health Care Professionals:

- What hand hygiene practices must be followed (e.g., times for hand washing, use of alcohol-based cleaning agents)?
- What changes to regular practice can be implemented to allow physical distancing?
- What type of PPE will be required? What type of PPE would be recommended, but not required? What training on use of PPE will be required?
- What would be done if PPE is unavailable, i.e., what procedures will be in place in the event that PPE is required but not available, e.g., cancelling appointments?
- What considerations should be added to end-of-day procedures?

Useful Resources

[The CHO's Coronavirus Information page \[updated frequently\]](#)

[CHO COVID-19 Question and Answer Resource Tool for Registrants](#)

[Chief Medical Officer of Health Directive #1 for Health Care Providers](#)

[Chief Medical Officer of Health Directive #2 for Health Care Providers](#)

[Health Canada Health Care Providers Resource Page](#)

[Health Canada Health Care Provider Guidance Documents](#)

[MOH Health Care Providers Resource Page](#)

[COVID-19 Reference Document for Symptoms](#)

[COVID-19 Patient Screening Guidance Document](#)

[Consent to Use Electronic Communication \(fillable Word form\)](#)

[Consent to Use Electronic Communication \(fillable pdf form\)](#)

[OMA Coronavirus Summary of Primary Care Guidelines v1-01-20](#)