

## COVID-19 Update to Registrants

March 19, 2020 – 4:30 pm.

Dear Registrant,

As front-line health care professionals who work in close proximity to patients, it's important that Opticians take reasonable and appropriate measures to minimize the risk of infections like COVID-19 in the practice environment to protect your patients, your staff and yourself.

### Continuity of Care to Opticianry Patients

We recommend that you rely on the revised [Standards of Practice](#) and use your professional judgment to decide whether to engage in remote practice with patients if appropriate, in order ensure continuity of care.

### The Practice Guidelines allow Opticians to:

- Deliver prescription eyeglasses to a patient prior to fitting and adapting
- Deliver finished eyewear by mail or courier
- Provide contact lens refills for existing contact lens patients by mail or courier
- Interact with patients by telephone, email and video chat
- Arrange an eyewear pick-up by someone other than a patient, like a friend or family member

### If remote practice is not possible:

- Consider scheduling appointments with patients to reduce the number of patients in the dispensary at one time
- Sanitize surfaces, frames and equipment between patients
- Wash hands between patients
- Disinfect frames thoroughly before returning to the display. We recommend following the [CDC guidelines](#) for disinfection of surfaces. Diluted household bleach solutions, alcohol solutions with at least **70% alcohol**, and most common [EPA-registered](#) household disinfectants should be effective.
  - **Cleaning** refers to the removal of germs, dirt, and impurities from surfaces. Cleaning does not kill germs, but by removing them, it lowers their numbers and the risk of spreading infection.
  - **Disinfecting** refers to using chemicals to kill germs on surfaces. This process does not necessarily clean dirty surfaces or remove germs, but by killing germs on a surface after cleaning, it can further lower the risk of spreading infection
- Post signs in your dispensary asking patients who are feeling unwell to reschedule

- Include messaging on your website, voicemail and email asking patients to reschedule if not well and advising of delivery options for contacts and eyeglasses
- Upon arrival at the dispensary, ask patients if they are experiencing fever, cough, or shortness of breath and/or have recently returned from travel outside of Canada and reschedule appointments as needed

For additional information about cleaning and disinfecting in health care settings, please consult the [Best Practices](#) document published by Public Health Ontario.

We recommend Opticians who are continuing to see patients self-isolate in their homes. Avoid contact with others, (including family members) stay in a separate room as much as possible, keep a good distance from others (2 metres) if you are in a room with others and use a separate bathroom if you have one.

### **COO Continuity of Service to Opticians and the Public**

Starting Monday, March 16, the College will temporarily be moving to a remote office model until further notice. We are taking this step to safeguard the health and safety of the staff and board members as well as minimize service disruptions to the public and registrants caused by illness associated with the COVID-19 virus.

The College has systems in place to ensure that staff are fully equipped to provide services to the public and registrants while working remotely. We expect to operate with few disruptions, none of which will affect the College's public protection mandate. Further information will follow shortly regarding office operations.

The College will continue to monitor the situation and update you. Feel free to reach out to us with your questions at [mail@collegeofopticians.ca](mailto:mail@collegeofopticians.ca) or follow us Facebook ([College of Opticians of Ontario](#)), Twitter ([@collegeofO](#)) and Instagram ([@collegeofopticiansofontario](#)), where we will post regular updates.

Wishing you good health in these challenging times,

Fazal and the COO Team