



## Introduction:

This guidance sets out how we as a chiropractic practice are changing our protocols and policies to prevent and limit risk of infection transmission of COVID-19 and to ensure the best possible care for the community during these unprecedented times.

## Purpose:

We, as chiropractic healthcare providers, are facing rapidly growing pressures to find ways to offer our expertise and support safely during this time, and for the future to come.

As many patients need support, it is essential that we can streamline present assessment arrangements and prioritise care to prevent the transmission of COVID-19 whilst still being there to provide the vital care our patients need.

This will be done by considering the patient's presenting complaint and the nature of the patient symptoms.

Our new assessment arrangements will also triage patients according to vulnerability and infection transmission risk, we will be taking into account the following factors – patient age, patient past medical history, current health status to determine the risk associated with receiving in-person assessment and treatment.

This implementation plan together with the 'The Coronavirus Act' enables us to make and apply person-centred decisions about who is most in need of care, and who might need to have care and support temporarily reduced or withdrawn to make sure we can maintain COVID-19 Infection control and prevention at our clinic.

**Your health and well-being is of the utmost importance to us and we are doing everything to deliver a service that will keep you, your loved ones and our staff safe during this time.**

# Protocol

## **PATIENT SCREENING**

During this period, both NEW and EXISTING patients will be required to undergo a COVID-19 risk assessment.

## **NEW PATIENTS**

All NEW patients may be offered a FREE telephone screening consultation by one of our team. During this remote consultation, you as a NEW patient will receive a COVID-19 disclosure email along with a Chiropractic Medical History Form.

You will need to respond to the COVID-19 disclosure questions online before you arrive for your in-person consultation and treatment. Your chiropractor will review your disclosure form, assess your COVID-19 vulnerability and infection transmission risk. Based on your COVID-19 risk assessment and your current complaint, your chiropractor will then either decide to continue with in-person chiropractic care, or he/she will give you home care advice and recommend appropriate exercises and will then monitor your symptoms with you via telephone.

Wherever possible, if it is assumed that is safe for you to attend an in-person consult given the current COVID-19 situation, and if your chiropractor feels that you will require in-person assessment and treatment, we will make a booking for you. You will be offered the next available appointment.

## **EXISTING PATIENTS**

All EXISTING patients will be able to book an in-person treatment/consultation unless they are considered infectious. You will be sent or given information about how Essential Chiropractic is monitoring and handling the COVID-19 infection threat and what responsibility you must take to keep yourself and our team safe. You will be asked on booking your appointment or upon arrival at the clinic to complete a short questionnaire that will allow us to assess your COVID-19 risk. On the rare occasion when it is assumed that that the risk too great, your chiropractor will recommend you return home and he/she will call you to triage you at home.

They will be able to suggest stretches, exercises and self-care to enable you to manage your condition from home until it is assumed it is safe for you to return for an in-person treatment:

## **ASSUMED AT RISK OF TRANSMISSION CRITERIA**

This is defined as: Given contact between an infectious and a susceptible individual, a patient is currently or has recently shown signs and symptoms of COVID-19 or come in contact with the COVID-19 virus in the last 14-21 days. These individuals may increase the risk of transferring the virus to other people.

You will be considered infectious if you have:

- Had prolonged contact with another infected individual in the last 14-21 days
- Been recently diagnosed with COVID-19 in last 14-21 days OR have any of the following symptoms
- Cough
- Fever
- Feeling “unwell”

### **PATIENT COVID-19 VULNERABILITY**

The term and concept of vulnerability is used in several fields in order to refer to the potential for poor outcomes, risk, or danger for any person. Certain groupings have been identified as higher risk relating to the severity of disease, these include:

- Age: >70
- Pregnant
- A pre-existing medical condition that is identified as high risk

You may be assessed at higher risk and vulnerable. In these cases, where there is a clear clinical need for in-person treatment, you may be offered an out of hours appointment to minimise your contact with the public and our team.

## **How you can help yourself and others to stay safe:**

### **Arrival at Clinic:**

- Patients are requested to dress appropriately to allow easy access to the body areas that will be treated to reduce the need to get changed. You are also requested to bring a towel with you.
- Appropriate signage will be placed at the outside entrance and inside the clinic, this signage will guide patients through hygiene and screening procedures.
- There will be a minimum of 5 minute spacing between appointments which allow our team to disinfectant surfaces in the treatment room and reception area between patients.
- Hand sanitiser will be available, and all patients will be required to sanitise their hands when entering the chiropractic clinic.
- Patients are requested not to touch any surfaces in the clinic, including door handles. All doors will be open to prevent the need to touch them
- Patients will be asked to use their own toilet facilities before arriving at clinic. If you do require to use our facilities, please notify the chiropractor. Appropriate sanitisation can be undertaken.
- All patients should wear a face mask or scarf to reduce droplet spread, if possible. If a patient wants to use a paper mask from us please let us know.
- Patients will be requested to wait in their car, and to come to the reception 5 minutes before their appointment time. If waiting in a car or outside is not possible, patients will have the option to wait in one of the treatment rooms. Please do not touch any surfaces in the room. This reduces the risk of transmission as we are preventing contact with other patients.

- Rooms will remain open where possible with adequate air flow to assist in removal of potential airborne droplets.
- Patients should only be accompanied by another person if they are a minor or require assistance. Other family members or friends will be requested to stay outside or in the car.
- Patients will be able to do contactless card payments at their appointment. If card payment is not possible, they will be requested to pay by BACS on their smart phones. Cash will NOT be accepted at this time.

**Many thanks for all your compliance and continued support. We hope to be running as normally as is possible and serving our patients as effectively and safely as we can.**