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COLLEGE OF  
**Optometrists**  
OF ONTARIO

## COVID-19 Update: March 25

We continue to monitor the situation, consult with stakeholders, and update our recommendations based on currently available information. Our recommendations on providing urgent care during COVID-19 are intended to ensure patients have access to urgent care, while reducing the number of patients who visit emergency rooms.

### Providing Urgent Care

All optometrists can triage calls from patients to determine if their situation is urgent. All optometrists can provide remote/telehealth care where possible.

Optometrists have been asked to use their best judgment in determining whether they are able to provide in-person, urgent care based on patient health and the optometrist's own situation, including health and risk factors. For those able to provide in-person care: the College strongly recommends that only those optometrists who *currently* have access to personal protective equipment (PPE) provide in-person care to urgent cases that are asymptomatic for COVID-19.

PPE includes masks (surgical or N95 if available), slit lamp breath shield, goggles, and disposable latex gloves (disposed of after each patient). N95 masks provide the best protection, but given they are in short supply, optometrists who do not currently have them are not being asked to acquire them.

Please note, any disposable gloves currently used in office settings are appropriate.

The College will soon be asking optometrists to indicate whether they have access to PPE for in-person care. This information will be used to create a searchable list accessible to both optometrists and the public.

Optometrists without PPE would use this list to identify colleagues who can perform in-person appointments.

Details on this list, and how to update your information, will be released soon.

### **In-person Appointments**

Prior to in-person appointments, optometrists should screen patients for COVID-19 symptoms (fever, cough, shortness of breath). Patients can also access a [self-assessment tool](#) from the Ministry of Health.

Patients with symptoms and who require urgent vision care should be directed to their local emergency room.

If no COVID-19 symptoms are present, and the case is determined to be urgent, proceed with the following:

1. Implement social distancing measures at your office, which can include allowing only one patient in at a time, taking a case history and performing as much of the assessment as possible remotely to reduce the length of the visit.
2. During the in-person assessment, use as little equipment as possible.
3. Following the appointment, disinfect equipment and the office following standard procedures.
4. It is highly recommended that optometrists remove clothing worn at the appointment upon returning home prior to entering the main living area.

Note the College has a **new phone number** to facilitate remote work during COVID-19. Contact [the College by email](#) or phone: **416-479-9295**.

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