



May 15, 2020

Dear World Council of Optometry (WCO) Members and Followers,

We are living in a time that has been very challenging as we all try to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. Early in the pandemic most eye care practices have closed to all but the most urgent vision and eye health problems, specifically things that could not wait to be addressed. Between using telehealth/telemedicine and restricted direct service, optometrists/eye care specialists have worked to be there for their patients. We are now starting to see the reopening of practices and the expansion of eye care services as people are trying to return to a normal lifestyle.

As many of you begin to see patients, many concerns have been identified as to how best to protect your patients, your staff and yourself from being exposed to the COVID-19 while still providing quality eye care. Many organizations have outlined the steps required to safely return to practice. We have attempted to collect the information from many sources for you and put them here to help you provide the best care possible to your patients during this pandemic. WCO is here to provide support by sharing several resources that we have identified. As you begin to prepare for reopening, there are several general categories that you consider and research prior to seeing patients, please see the below recommendations.

- Consider reorganizing your office physically and modify your appointment schedule to ensure that physical distancing is maintained.
- Develop patient flow to protect everyone in the office by screening for COVID-19 symptoms prior to the patient entering the office. Consider surveying patients for symptoms in a two-step process:
 1. When the patient calls to schedule the appointment.
 2. Upon their arrival at the door.
- If a patient has the signs of the virus, refer them to contact their general health practitioner, addressing urgent issues immediately. Ask the patient to call and reschedule their appointment once they are returned to good health.
- Request that anyone entering your office maintains a facial cover. The use of face masks needs to include the patient and person accompanying them. In addition to facial masks, you will need to ensure that there exists sufficient access to personal protective equipment, or PPE, for your staff. Please refer to the sources provided for recommendations for PPE types and how they should be used.
- Sanitizing and disinfecting must take place in between patients in all aspects of the office. This would include the entrance area, exam room and equipment as well as any frames that a patient has touched. This may be time-consuming and will be an important consideration when deciding on an appropriate schedule for the clinicians.



The resources listed at the bottom of this page describe in detail each of the actions listed above which are needed to ensure that your office staff, your patients and you are properly protected.

The WCO encourages you to take proper precautions published by local and global health organizations. In addition, we ask that you continue to review the guidelines and resources provided by the World Health Organization (WHO).

We are here to support you and will continue to update our [COVID-19 news page](#) regularly with relevant updates.

Sincerely,

Mr. Paul Folkesson
World Council of Optometry President

American Academy of Optometry (AAO): COVID-19 Hub <https://www.aaopt.org/my-covid-hub>

American Optometric Association (AOA): Coronavirus Page <https://www.aoa.org/coronavirus>

American Telemedicine Association (ATA): COVID-19 Resources

<https://www.americantelemed.org/resources/telehealth-resources-for-eye-care-during-covid-19/>

Center for Disease Control and Prevention: Reopening Guidance

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/reopen-guidance.html>

Essilor Vision Foundation: Reopening Resources and Marketing Kit

https://www.evfusa.org/resources/?utm_source=ods&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=showthelove&utm_content=button#odkit

World Health Organization (WHO): Getting Your Workplace Ready for COVID-19

https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/coronaviruse/advice-for-workplace-clean-19-03-2020.pdf?sfvrsn=bd671114_6&download=true

World Health Organization (WHO): Resources for Reopening

<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/technical-guidance/guidance-for-schools-workplaces-institutions>