



CDA COVID-19 UPDATE

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A Message for CDA Stakeholders

Below is a status update from the Canadian Dental Association (CDA) about the COVID-19 pandemic for the week ending November 19, 2021. CDA is planning a final COVID-19 update in early 2022. Future updates will be communicated on an ad hoc basis should new urgencies arise, or via CDA's other communications channels.

Quick Facts: Current COVID-19 Situational Report

Dr. Aaron Burry, CDA's COVID-19 Team Lead and Deputy CEO - Professional Affairs, provides a video update on the COVID-19 pandemic to the Presidents and CEOs of CDA's Corporate Member provincial dental associations.



Video Length: 22 minutes. Recorded: November 16, 2021.

Video highlights:

Global Fast Facts

- 41% of the global population are now fully vaccinated. Vaccination programs are currently vaccinating 200 million people per week, which correlates to a 1% weekly increase in the total number of people vaccinated.
- Case numbers have returned to a growth phase, increasing to 3.5 million per week worldwide.
- Infections are rising in 55 of 240 countries.
- We are seeing the return of lockdowns and other restrictions in Europe.
- Infections continue to be driven by low vaccination rates.
- Health Canada is expected to announce approval of vaccines for 5 to 11-year-old children on November 19, 2021.

Public Health Messaging and Responses: It is important to understand public health messaging and public health responses about the present situation in Canada. Currently, there is significant variation in terms of provincial responses to the pandemic. This can be confusing, particularly around provincial border areas. This trend is likely to continue as new measures are reintroduced while other are being relaxed.

Community outbreaks of unknown origin remain a concern. These outbreaks are predominately associated with unvaccinated individuals and are leading to an increase in local restrictions. Of less concern are cluster areas where the outbreak is traceable, largely contained, and limited action will be taken.

From Pandemic to Endemic: There are still some countries (e.g., China, Hong Kong, Taiwan) that are continuing with a containment strategy and are trying to eliminate COVID altogether. However, a containment strategy is not viable in the long term because it is not possible to keep borders closed indefinitely. Most countries have moved to a management phase in the pandemic, and the hope is to enter a controlled phase in 2022 where COVID is endemic. In order to achieve this endemic phase, we will see a combination of political and economic decision making, in addition to public health measures. Based on the experience currently being seen, the ability to achieve a controlled state requires vaccination of the majority of the population.

Third Dose Vaccinations: The National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI) has recommended a third dose of vaccine for all individuals aged 18 years and over. Provinces are announcing roll outs of third doses according to various priority factors. Dentists have been prioritized for third doses in some provinces and will be eligible 168 days after receiving their second dose.

Vaccine Protection and Deaths among U.S. Veterans During 2021: Dr. Burry walks through a [study](#) based on ~800,000 U.S. veterans, ~500,000 of whom were vaccinated and ~300,000 who were not vaccinated. Individuals who had been double

vaccinated within six months of the study were approximately 90% less likely to develop COVID-19. This protection decreased in individuals who had been vaccinated for more than 6 months. With all vaccines, a return to 90% level of effectiveness against infection was restored with a booster shot.

Areas of Focus and Reminders for Dentists:

- Wave 4: expect a pattern of seasonal or cyclical outbreaks. There is likely to be an uptick in case numbers, but the situation will remain manageable.
- If considering travel to regions/countries with low vaccination rates, expect possible lock downs and suspension of services.
- Think locally: be extra cautious in areas of low vaccination rates or where clusters are reported.
- Infection control measures should remain at an elevated level for the next year. This includes renewed vaccination for all dentists and staff, N95 masks and full eye protection.
- Hand and surface sanitization reminder: the current spike in influenza cases is associated with a significant reduction in hand sanitizing and cleaning in public areas.
- Consider monitoring the vaccination status of patients for whom it has been longer than 6 months since their last dose.
- COVID lookalikes: para influenza, influenza and RSV infections in the community are likely to impact dental practices and cause a need to reschedule patients who are showing COVID-like symptoms.

COVID-19 Practice Recovery Task Force (“The Task Force”):

This group includes representatives from all CDA Corporate Member provincial dental associations (PDAs). The Task Force has worked throughout the pandemic providing:

- information exchange on return-to-practice status across the country;
- strategies for obtaining and securing PPEs; and
- communications to the public on dentists returning to practice.

The Task force addressed the early pressures of practice recovery and has shifted its focus to return to practice. At the October and November meetings, all indications were that dental offices are continuing to adjust to the new realities related to practising in the COVID-19 era. The Task Force will be moving to complete its present workplan and will turn its attention to completing a comprehensive debriefing session to review the pandemic efforts to summarize and/or gather best practices, lessons learned, and other

findings. The goal of this debriefing session, to occur in 2022, is to help position dentistry for any future disruptive events.

Reminder: Mental Health in the Workplace. Safeguarding your mental health and overall wellness is important, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Task Force has been focused on *The Working Mind*, a short course on mental health in the workplace, from the Mental Health Commission of Canada. [The Working Mind](#) is an evidence-based program designed to promote mental health and reduce the stigma around mental illness in the workplace. By reducing stigma and discrimination, the course helps organizations create a culture that fosters greater awareness and support for mental health among employees, managers and employers.

The Task Force has been working to adapt the content for dentistry. CDA is approaching the last phases of customizing this pilot course, which will be called, *The Working Mind: Workplace Mental Health & Wellness for Oral Health Care Professionals*. CDA is working closely with CDA Corporate Member provincial dental associations to determine how this course could potentially be integrated into their membership offerings. It is anticipated that this course will be available in 2022. CDA will provide more details as this project moves ahead.

CDA Knowledge Products:

[CDA Oasis](#) is an online community for clinical support and the latest information on issues and technology impacting the dental profession. The following discussion related to COVID-19 has been recorded since CDA's last COVID update in October:

- [CDA COVID-19 Tracking Survey Data, October 2021](#): Over the past year, the Canadian Dental Association (CDA) has been tracking consumer/public opinion and behavioural trends related to the COVID-19 pandemic. The latest data of the COVID-19 tracking survey, prepared by Abacus Data for CDA, is now available. **(November 8, 2021)**

Reminder: CDA Essentials, Issue 5 is available [online](#). Below are some of the edition's highlights pertaining to the pandemic. Issue 6 will be available in December 2021.

- [CDA Statement on Mandatory Vaccination](#)
- [Your COVID-19 Questions Answered](#)
- [Dr. Michael Chow A Year After Recovery](#)



Click image to access CDA Essentials, Issue 5, 2021.

Mental Health and Wellness:

Remember to prioritize your well-being and take time to check in with how you are feeling. Wellness Together Canada offers [free and confidential online mental health and substance use supports available 24/7](#), including 1 to 1 counselling. For more information, check out this factsheet, [Wellness Together Canada – At a Glance](#).

This tip sheet also provides [10 things you can do right now to reduce anxiety, stress, worry related to COVID-19](#).

The Members' Assistance Program (MAP) is available: Individuals can access mental health and wellness support by calling CDSPI's Members' Assistance Program (MAP) at **1.844.578.4040** or visiting www.workhealthlife.com. MAP provides a variety of resources to help individuals deal with life's challenges. It is a confidential counselling, referral and information service for individuals who are dealing with mental health challenges or need advice on topics such as physical fitness, nutrition or parenting. MAP services and resources are offered through LifeWorks, Canada's largest provider of Employee and Family Assistance Programs.



Free counselling, referral and information service for dentists, dental office employees, and their families.

The CDA COVID-19 Response Team works diligently on a range of fronts to help minimize and mitigate the impacts of COVID-19 on the dental profession. CDA is working to address scientific, clinical, economic and business-related matters impacting dentistry, including efforts to increase awareness about the mental health and wellness of dentists, their families and dental office employees during these challenging times. CDA will communicate regular updates as new information becomes available.



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