

March 16th 2020

With growing community concern around the COVID-19 virus we are reaching out to assure our clients that we are striving to maintain top health and cleanliness standards. We all need to work together to ensure our staff, clients and surrounding community remain healthy and safe.

IDHHC has taken the following steps in response to the emergence of COVID-19:

- We are keeping educated and up-to-date with the latest on COVID-19
<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/being-prepared.html#a5>
- We have a sanitizing hand lotion at the front reception
- Continuing our regular practice of cleaning treatment room surfaces thoroughly in between clients with disinfecting products
- Increasing the frequency of cleaning our common areas with disinfecting products
- Ensuring staff are not coming to work sick

As of today, the risk of contracting to the public remains low for residents of the Capital Regional District. However, our immediate plans are to **cancel Drop-In Game day on Tuesday afternoon and Speechreading Classes on Thursday afternoon for the next two weeks**. We will reach out and let you know when these activities will commence again. We will continue with appointments as planned where possible, and monitor information provided by the government health authorities for best practices.

IDHHC will pro-actively reach out to you, our clients, prior to your scheduled appointments to ask you about travel, travel undertaken by members of your household/individuals that you are in close contact with and their health; specifically, if they are experiencing or have recently experienced fever or a dry cough.

We will be asking individuals (staff, clients, board members and community members) who have travelled, are in close contact with individuals who have traveled to remain away from the office **for 14 days**. In addition, individuals who are experiencing flu-like symptoms will also be asked not to come into the office for 14 days.

To help prevent the spread of viruses, we are also asking our community to practice good hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette. Follow these steps as you would with the common cold or flu:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth with unwashed hands
- Cough or sneeze into your elbow or sleeve
- Dispose of tissues appropriately
- Avoid contact with sick people

We also ask that you:

- Stay up to date on the spread of the virus and prevention tips here <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/being-prepared.html#a5>
- Kindly use the hand sanitizing lotion at the front reception upon arrival.
- If you are sick please call and cancel your appointment. There will be no issue for short notice cancellations due to illness or for unattended appointments where the COVID-19 Virus is suspected.
- If you have recently traveled outside of Canada or are in close contact with someone who has please do not schedule any appointments and observe the two week self isolation period recommended by the BC Health Authority here: <https://bc.ctvnews.ca/b-c-health-officials-discouraging-all-non-essential-travel-outside-canada-1.4850891>

We are acting from a position of caution and caring regarding the well-being of our staff, clients and community. A situation like this lends itself to rumors and can lead to unfounded concerns and fear. Our approach to managing this situation is guided by evidence-based information from Island Health, the BC Centre for Disease Control, the Public Health Agency of Canada, and the World Health Organization. We are part of a caring and respectful community and as such we will share fact-based information as it becomes available and is relevant to Vancouver Island.

IDHHC appreciates every one's efforts and understanding as we experience this evolving situation together. We will endeavor to communicate with our community as IDHHC takes actions over the coming weeks based on the information available.

Thank you for your understanding and be safe and healthy.

Denise Robertson
Executive Director