

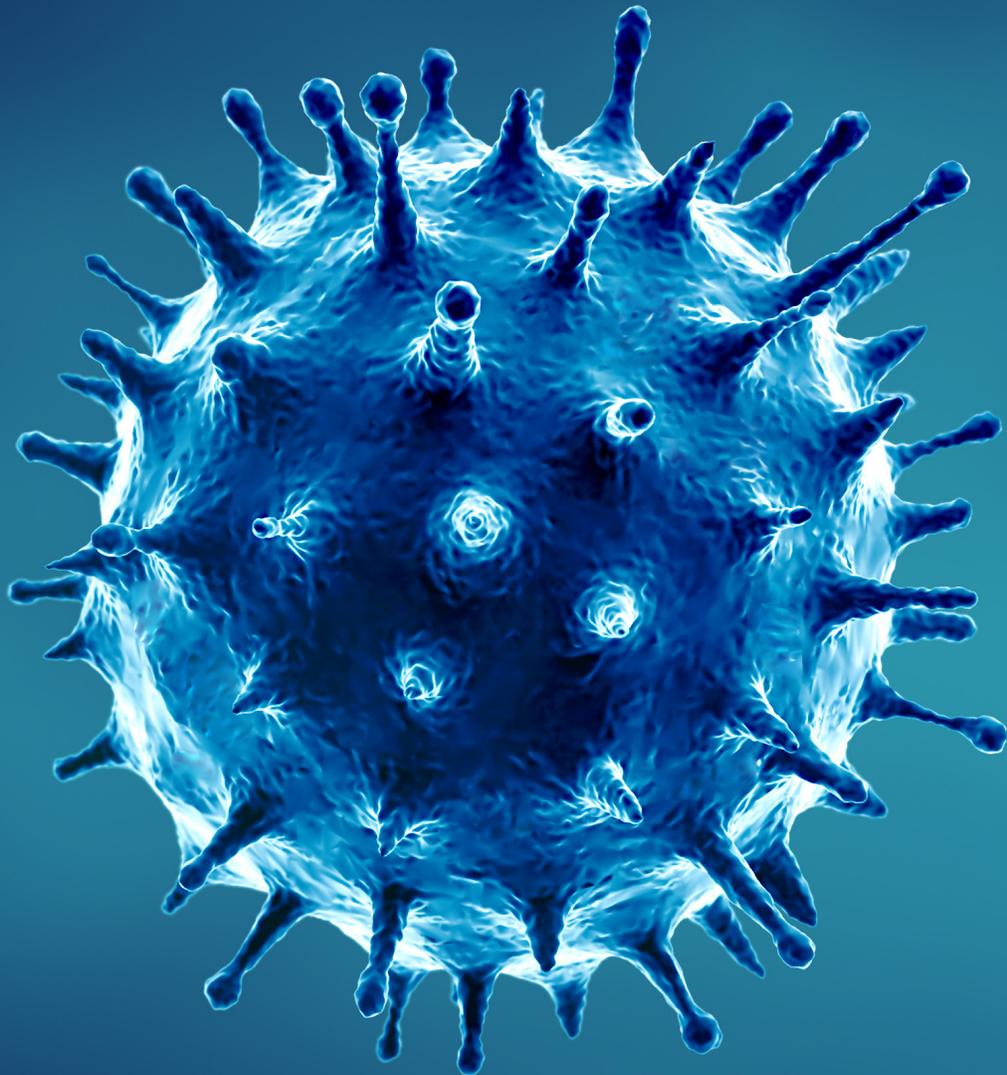
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COUNCIL FOR HEALTHY EYES CANADA (CHEC)

# Covid-19 Toolkit for Optometrists

COVID-19 IN CANADA



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Council for Healthy Eyes Canada (CHEC) Optometrist Toolkit resources are developed and made available through the collaborative partnerships between the vision industry and eye care professionals

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## Introduction

To help reduce the spread of Novel Coronavirus (Covid-19 or SARS-COV-2) and support social distancing, many Optometrists have shuttered offices and are shifting to remote/virtual services to continue caring for patients during the pandemic. This has changed how you care for patients during the lockdown, and as restrictions are lifted will continue to impact how you operate on daily basis to ensure the safety of patients and all Canadians.

This document contains practical information for Canadian Optometrists related to the Covid-19 pandemic and virtual resources to consider for your practice. We have curated information from various sources including Federation of Optometric Regulatory Authorities of Canada (FORAC), Canadian Association of Optometrists (CAO) and various provincial associations.

As we all continue to navigate this ever-changing situation, we hope you find this toolkit and other resources developed by the Council for Healthy Eyes Canada (CHEC) helpful. Our goal to provide you with useful resources is made possible through the collaborations and relationships we've developed and continue to expand.

CHEC is grateful for the support from industry partners like Alcon, Essilor, Johnson and Johnson, Nikon and Shamir.

The Council for Healthy Eyes Canada (CHEC) very much appreciates ongoing leadership from our industry partners in helping to found the highly successful ThinkAboutYourEyes.ca (TAYE) integrated marketing, communications and data collection campaign. We also would like to thank Canadian eye care professionals such as Optometrists at this very challenging time.

The Alcon logo consists of the word "Alcon" in a bold, blue, sans-serif font.

## About us

Organized as a collaboration between eye care professionals and industry, CHEC is a registered not-for-profit organization that is dedicated to improving eye health for Canadians through awareness and education initiatives. Through strategic partnerships and the guidance of our representative Board, we aim to increase awareness and eye care intentions of Canadians from coast to coast, subsequently leading to an uplift in the number of eye exams and vision treatments across the country.

ThinkAboutYourEyes.ca (TAYE) is a bilingual (English and French) integrated marketing, communications and data collection campaign organized annually by CHEC, which has increased foot traffic to Canadian Optometrists by well-over five percent (5%) each year and has successfully reached millions of Canadians since its launch in 2018. TAYE is a collaborative effort that is designed to educate the public about the benefits of vision health and promote the importance of annual comprehensive eye exams.

To learn more, visit:

<https://www.thinkaboutyoureyes.ca/>

<http://councilforhealthyeyes.ca/>

### Disclaimer

The information provided in this document is for general informational purposes only. The contents of this document are provided in good faith; however, we make no representation of warranty of any kind, express or implied, regarding the accuracy, adequacy, validity, reliability, availability or completeness of any information in this document. Under no circumstances shall CHEC be held legally liable.

## Covid-19 in Canada

### Canadian sentiment and trends

Canadians are expressing mixed and changing feelings as COVID-19 progresses. Now more than ever, Canadians have a critical role to maintain social distancing as the government engages in conversation regarding when, and how, segments of the economy can be reopened.

- Nearly [5.4 million Canadians](#) are receiving emergency federal aid from the government, with **hundreds of thousands more claims waiting to be processed**;
- In Canada, the federal and provincial governments are [beginning discussions](#) about reopening the economy in phases, with the expectation that **current restrictions will stay in place for several weeks to maintain progress**;
- The debate about [when normalcy can resume](#) continues, **building on the successful measures to social distance and flatten the curve in Canada**;
- Even as calls for normalcy increase, a recent [Angus Reid poll](#) reports **77 per cent** of Canadians say it is **too soon to begin relaxing social distancing** requirements and business closures. Additionally, **41 per cent of Canadians** believe it will be **3-6 months before things will be “back to normal”** in Canada and **43 per cent** say they believe it will be **more than six months**;
- When it comes to the work from home experience, [Leger and the Association of Canadian Studies](#) found that **50 per cent of Canadians are working from home** and **79 per cent** of them report that they are having a positive experience; and,
- **Sentiments around the healthcare system** show that **49 per cent** of Canadians are [concerned that the healthcare system in their community can handle the pandemic](#), down from **69 per cent** the week of March 30th.

### Optometry community in Canada

During such unprecedented times, it's wonderful to see a universal sense of care and camaraderie emerge among optometrists across Canada. Below are a few examples of individuals and organizations in our industry who are stepping up to make a difference.

### Individual efforts in the community

In a short period of time, many eye care professionals within our community have made a positive impact on the lives of Canadians. Below are some examples that may be valuable for your practice to implement or for you to share with your patients:

- **Edmonton optometrist, Sarah Keep** and her husband, [saw an opportunity to give back to the community during the pandemic](#) and manufactured and donated 150 protective masks to optometry clinics.
- **Dr. Nasir Khan, president of the Alberta College of Optometrists**, has made a few media appearances expressing his thought leadership during the pandemic. Khan has spoken to [encouraging optometry offices to remain open](#) in order to reduce the impact on emergency rooms and [communicated strict infection and prevention controls](#).
- **Canadian optometrist, Dr. Rob Kloepfer**, takes pride in [educating the public](#) about eye care through lectures and public appearances. Recently, [he called out parents](#) when stating the importance of frequent eyeglasses cleaning, handwashing before contact lens use, and avoiding sharing eye drops in households to avoid the spread of the coronavirus.
- **Dr. Weslie Hamada, O.D. FAAO, LensCrafters** shared that, despite not being able to give up our screens during this unfortunate time, there are some very [simple steps we can take to protect our vision](#).
- **University of Waterloo optometry student, Cindy Shan**, wrote an article about how [optometrists and other health professionals can talk to patients](#) about their mental health during the pandemic. Shan emphasized that there is [more to helping patients](#) than completing an eye exam, when urging optometrists to support the overall wellbeing of their patients.

## Organizations leading by example

- Proper eye care and access to vision correction is still essential during a pandemic. Below are examples of how some organizations are addressing health and safety concerns and continuing to meet the demand for corrective lenswear. **Clearly™** updated their followers on [Instagram™](#) and [Twitter™](#) on how the company has been operating during COVID-19. Other actions on social include:
  - Sharing tips to ensure a successful transition to working from home, encouraging people to share their tips in the comments;
  - Their [donation of safety glasses to the healthcare heroes](#) at Vancouver Coastal Health; and,
  - Reminders to [take a few minutes away from the screen](#) for your eyes and spirits.
- **Nikon Lenswear** posted on Facebook™ an announcement on how it is working to maintain their level of standards during COVID-19. Other actions on social include:
  - Sharing an eyesight routine to relax, your eyes, body and mind;
  - Posts directed at considering different lenses for this new normal such as E-life Neo for increased screen time; and
  - Sharing a message of support and reminding people to enjoy the moments with their families during this time.
- **Essilor™** posted on [Facebook™](#) announcing how it is operating during COVID-19. Other actions on social include:
  - Sharing [tips to limit the impact of long work hours](#) on your eyes;
  - Posts directed at eyecare professionals announcing that Essilor Academy is [offering micro-trainings for the next four weeks](#) on a variety of business subjects; and,
  - Sharing [appreciation for essential employees](#) that are working at the office/labs to help customers/patients.
- **Alcon** has a [dedicated page](#) on their Website detailing how / they've implemented new measures during this time for their associates, ensuring critical supply and promoting the safe use of their products. Other actions include:
  - Posting safe handling tips on their social channels regarding proper [hand washing](#) for contact care; and
  - [Offering free shipping](#) on all contact orders to ensure vision isn't impacted.
- **College of Optometrists of Ontario** includes a "[Find Urgent Eye Care](#)" section on their website, along with postings providing [relevant information for patients](#) and updates for optometrists. Other actions on social include:
  - [Facebook post](#) providing updates on urgent care during COVID-19 and how those with vision issues can search the Public Register using two new search fields.
- **Johnson & Johnson Vision** [posted on their website](#) highlighting J&J Vision's response to COVID-19 which includes taking comfort in ACUVUE, continued patient care and prioritizing safety at every level. Other actions on social include:
  - Encouraging everyone, including contact lens wearers, to [follow CDC guidance](#) and avoid touching their eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands. A [link to ACUVUE's steps](#) for cleaning contact lenses has also been shared;
  - Announcing the measures J&J has taken to [maintain its supply chain](#) operations during COVID-19 along with a [\\$50 million commitment to support frontline health workers](#) battling COVID-19;
  - Highlighting lead vaccine candidate for COVID-19, landmark new partnership with U.S. department of Health & Human Services and [commitment to supply one billion vaccines worldwide](#) for emergency pandemic use; and,
  - Reminding of best [practices such as the 20/20/20 rule](#). Encouraging people working from home to practice taking 20 seconds to look at least 20 feet away every 20 minutes.
- **Indigo's Love of Reading Foundation** committed [\\$1 million in books and educational resources](#) to support Canadian children in need during the pandemic.