

Dear CEPNZ members,

A recent update on practice during Alert Level 2 has been released by the Ministry of Health and is summarized below. More detailed and updated guidance is available on the Ministry of Health web page for [Allied Health practitioners](#). Consider the advice below and apply caution when practicing as most clinical exercise physiologists work with vulnerable groups doing potentially higher risk activities.

Alert Level 2 Guidelines

Virtual appointments are the preferred option at Alert Level 2. Face to face appointments can be used assuming appropriate health and safety processes are put in place.

Screening for COVID-19 symptoms prior to face to face appointments

- You should not be treating patients who are unwell.
- Practitioners should screen patients prior to care for symptoms including fever, cough, sore throat, sneezing or runny nose, temporary loss of sense of smell, and trouble breathing.
- If patients have recently had contact with others who have had symptoms or have symptoms they should be directed to receive testing for COVID-19 and to self-isolate.

Practicing good infection prevention control procedures.

- The best defence is basic hygiene, especially washing hands regularly.
- Practitioners should wash hands before and after patient contact or touching an aseptic surface, use proper cough and sneezing etiquette, avoid touching their face, and clean surfaces regularly, especially common surfaces like touch screens, exercise equipment, blood pressure cuff, door handles etc.

Using the appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE).

- The risk of community transmission is minimal at Alert Level 2. Use of PPE depends on the activity. Practitioners should assess the infection risk with the patient before a face to face appointment.
- When providing care for individuals who do not have symptoms or do not have COVID-19, a surgical mask may be used if it is not possible to maintain physical distancing of 1 metre or the activity is aerosol-generating. Exercise itself is not considered aerosol generating but apply caution.
- Higher risk activities including cardiopulmonary exercise testing, spirometry, and blood sampling may require higher levels of PPE.
- PPE should not be reused and used PPE can be disposed of in a separate bag and sealed before placing in general waste

Keeping accurate documentation of appointments to aid contact tracing if required.

- Practitioners are expected to maintain accurate clinical notes should contact tracing be required

Physical distancing

- Numbers of patients should be restricted to maintain physical distancing of 1 metre between patients and practitioners
- Group exercise classes can occur so long as physical distancing is in place and class size is limited to 10 participants including the practitioner(s).