

# Phonak

# Clinic Preparation

# Handbook

## Sanitary measures for preparedness in view of COVID-19

Encouraging news of lifted restrictions reach us from across the world. Slowly we are entering a new phase, which is one of hope and resilience, but also one of uncertainty. Hearing care professionals are anxious not only to get back to work, but also that clients and staff feel safe and well cared for. Heading back to business with Phonak means that you as an HCP are well prepared for the "new normal". Most of our target population fits within the high-risk category as defined by the World Health Organization (WHO). An abundance of caution is required to ensure their safety. This recommendation is designed to provide guidance to you and your staff so that you are well equipped to receive clients according to the new standard of care as a result of COVID-19. Having a detailed plan will reassure staff and clients that it is safe to start performing in-clinic treatments again. It will also help in maximizing efficiency with regards to restricted number of clients allowed in the clinic at any one time. We encourage you to stay flexible, stay informed, and honor the health and safety of your clients, your staff and yourselves.

### For the clinic staff

The health of your staff is critical to the health of your business. Your receptionist and other front of house staff are the gate keepers to your clinic and will need to modify their typical practices during this time.

If you have a large team with multiple Hearing Care Professionals (HCP) and front office staff (FOS), consider assigning a COVID Team Lead, who is responsible for all COVID related modifications, ensures compliance and reviews local laws and guidance as the pandemic evolves. Each member of the FOS should be assigned specific HCPs to ensure compliance across the patient journey.



### Task for COVID Team Lead

1. Ensure clinic-wide compliance
2. Execute all modifications
3. Review local law and regulations (weekly)
4. Monitor Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), and order with proper lead time a 30-day supply of the products needed to support your clinic. The following list of items is not exhaustive and may not be needed for all clinics. If you have difficulty acquiring gloves, masks, or glasses contact your local Phonak representative for support.
  - a) Soap
  - b) Disinfecting wipes and spray
  - c) Hand sanitizer
  - d) Paper towels
  - e) Tissue
  - f) Face masks
  - g) Gloves
  - h) Glasses

### Before the client arrives, consider the following modifications:

- Display signage inside and outside the clinic explaining the COVID-19 measures that are currently in place.
- Space out in-clinic client visits to allow time for disinfecting between visits and to minimize people in the waiting room.
- Remove waiting room chairs to allow for a social distance of 6 ft or 2 m
- When confirming the appointments for the next day ask clients:
  - Do you or anyone in your household have coronavirus?
  - Do you have a cough?
  - Do you have a high temperature?
  - Does anyone in your household have a new, continuous cough or a high temperature?
  - Have you been deemed a high-risk patient by your primary care physician?
  - Have you traveled in a high-infection area or internationally in the last 2 weeks?If any of these questions are answered "YES", postpone the appointments by at least 2 weeks.
- Ask clients to drop-off their hearing aids for service and return when ready, rather than waiting in the clinic.
- If possible, collect payment from the client before the visit to avoid exchanging cash or pin entry.
- Always wear a face mask.

### Once the client has arrived, consider the following modifications:

- Have hand sanitizer available at the front desk.
- Limit interaction whenever possible.
- Ask clients if they have had symptoms of COVID-19 (fever, trouble breathing and coughing) or been exposed to someone with symptoms. If any of these questions are answered "YES", postpone the appointments by at least 2 weeks.
- Mark the floor with masking tape 6 ft or 2 m from the front desk sign in. Stand or sit at that distance while the patient is signing in.
- Wearing gloves is encouraged when exchanging any items with the client: hearing aids, insurance cards etc.
- Disinfect sign in pen with disinfecting wipe after use.
- Ask accompanying persons to wait outside if possible.
- Wipe all surfaces the client touches during their stay prior to the arrival of the next client.

## For the hearing care professional

As the HCP, you will be in the closest contact with your clients when providing direct care.

- Clean all frequently touched surfaces and equipment (such as video-otoscopes) with disinfectants after every client visit. Make sure to follow the guidance of the manufacturer of the equipment.
- Wash your hands frequently with soap thoroughly (for at least 20 seconds) and use appropriate hand sanitizer, before and after being in contact with a client.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.
- Always wear a face mask that covers face and mouth. Follow the instructions from the mask manufacturer regarding use, re-use and care. Always wash hands carefully before putting on and after removing a face mask.
- Wearing disposable nitrile gloves are encouraged during the handling and disinfecting of hearing aids and during all client interactions.
- After every client, the gloves should be disposed of in a trash can with a lid or in an additional self-containing plastic bag.
- Remove gloves so that skin contact can be minimized (example: CDC recommendations)
- Wear additional protective clothing such as protective eyewear and lab coat as recommend by your health care authorities.
- Accept hearing aids and accessories with disinfectant wipes or ask clients to place them in a tray with a disposable cloth.
- Clean and disinfect hearing aids and accessories with disinfectant wipes and dispose wipes in a trash can with a lid or in an additional self-containing plastic bag.
- When accepting back trial devices, throw away receivers and domes and disinfect the remaining components.
- After servicing hearing aids and accessories, clean and disinfect all surfaces and tools used (e.g. listening scope, earmold cutter, etc) with disinfectant wipe and/or dispose in the trash can with a lid or in an additional self-containing plastic bag. These processes are in addition to your existing General Precaution cleaning protocols.
- Place clean hearing aids and accessories on new disinfectant wipes or tray with new disposable cloth.
- Hand over to client while keeping appropriate distance, 6 ft or 2 m.
- Use disinfectant wipes recommended by your health care authorities (e.g. EPA in the US) to be effective against the new coronavirus and strictly follow the manufacturer's instructions. The disinfectant should not contain strong oxidizing agents such as chlorine. Water-based disinfectants are safest for the materials of hearing aids. Use with extreme caution to avoid microphone contact.
- Once the device has been serviced and surfaces disinfected, remove gloves and wash hands as recommended above.
- Ventilate rooms with fresh air between clients if possible

## For the clients

Many clients may currently have concerns about visiting a clinic or any healthcare institution. Whenever possible, it is advisable to offer remote audiological care, especially when it comes to high-risk patients. A blended-care model that incorporates best practice audiology, combining limited face-to-face contact, with use of digital eSolutions offers patients individualized care, whilst keeping them safe over the next 12 months. This model has obvious benefits until a vaccine is found, but also offers advantages for clients with reduced mobility, or who wishes to reduce travelling or simply for someone with a busy schedule.



While there are many appointment types that are easily handled via the suite of digital eSolutions we do recommend the first full diagnostic assessment is always performed in the clinic.

### **If an in-clinic visit is needed to conduct a hearing evaluation, consider the following adaptations:**

- Open the clinic door with your elbow, when possible.
- Have hand sanitizer available at around the facility for client use.
- Wear face mask at all times.
- Ensure that testing and counseling room equipment and surfaces have been cleaned with disinfecting wipes.

- Conduct the case history interview and needs assessment sitting 6 ft or 2 m from the client.
- Ask clients for consent to approach them closely. Reduce close contact time to the absolute minimum.
- If you have video otoscopy equipment, which allows greater separation than handheld otoscopy, use this method for inspecting outer ear and canal health.
- Wherever possible, ask clients to put on their own hearing aids themselves to minimize body contact.
- Keep appointments as short as possible and limit movement of clients in the clinic. Limit time with clients in small rooms (such as sound treated booth) and try to regularly ventilate rooms.

Good preparation is the first step to get us from striving mode to a thriving mode. As we all start a new brighter chapter, Phonak will keep standing by HCP's as a trusted partner. We will focus all efforts to help navigate this new reality so that HCP's can quickly go back to what they do best – providing best practice audiological care.

Get back to business with Phonak...Life is on (again).

## Appendix: Printable safety check list for clinic

Client Journey	Task	Responsible (client/FOS/HCP)
<b>Before Arrival</b>	Display signage explaining the COVID-19 measures that are currently in place.	FOS
	Send your customer base a letter/email describing the measures you are taking to keep them safe (in-practice measures, eSolutions, etc.)	
	Space out client visits to allow time for disinfecting and to minimize people in the waiting room.	FOS
	Remove waiting room chairs to allow for a social distance of 6 ft	FOS
	When confirming the appointments for the next day ask clients if they have had symptoms of COVID-19. If so, reschedule at least 2 weeks later. Do you or anyone in your household have coronavirus? Do you have a new, continuous cough? Do you have a high temperature (37.8°C or over)? Does anyone in your household have a new, continuous cough or a high temperature? Have you been deemed a high-risk patient by your primary care physician? Have you traveled in a high-infection area or internationally in the last 2 weeks?	FOS
	Ask clients to drop-off their hearing aids for service and return when ready	FOS
	Clean all frequently touched surfaces and equipment (such as video-otoscopes) with disinfectants	HCP
	Wash your hands frequently and thoroughly with soap	HCP/FOS/client
<b>During Visit</b>	Upon arrival, ask clients if they have had symptoms of COVID-19 (fever, trouble breathing and coughing). If so, ask them to reschedule.	FOS
	Stand 6ft from the front desk while the client is signing in.	FOS
	Wear gloves when exchanging any items with the client:	FOS
	Accept hearing aids and accessories with disinfectant wipes	FOS/HCP
	Ask accompanying persons to wait in their vehicle if possible.	FOS
	Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth and wear a face mask and gloves.	HCP/FOS/Client
	Wear additional protective clothing such as face mask, protective eyewear and lab coat as recommend by your health care authorities.	HCP
<b>After departure</b>	Disinfect sign in pen with disinfecting wipe after use.	FOS
	Wash your hands frequently and thoroughly with soap.	HCP/FOS/client
	Dispose of gloves in a trash can without making contact with your skin.	HCP/FOS
	After servicing hearing aids and accessories, clean and disinfect all surfaces and tools used.	HCP/FOS

## Disclaimer

Please be aware and always follow any local and national guidelines as provided by your health care authorities. These recommendations are based on World Health Organization (WHO) and expert advice. Phonak and Sonova shall not be held responsible for consequences of the recommendations and you shall apply good judgement in performing your professional tasks

The information contained here represents the recommendations for current practice where and when permitted by law, during this time of the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic. The health and safety of our HCPs and their staff and client is our number one priority, and our hope in sharing this information is that it may be of assistance to others. Please be advised that some or all of the information contained in this document may not be applicable to all businesses or places of work. Please also note that this is a "living" document that may be updated at any time given the fluidity of this situation.

This guide provides general recommendation. All facilities must comply with all applicable laws. If there is a conflict between the recommendations in Playbook and the applicable law, the facility must follow the applicable law.

## References

WHO advise for the public	<a href="https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public">https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public</a>
Remove gloves	<a href="https://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/pdf/poster-how-to-remove-gloves.pdf">https://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/pdf/poster-how-to-remove-gloves.pdf</a>
Handwash	<a href="https://www.who.int/gpsc/clean_hands_protection/en/">https://www.who.int/gpsc/clean_hands_protection/en/</a>
Handwash	<a href="https://www.who.int/gpsc/5may/How_To_HandWash_Poster.pdf?ua=1">https://www.who.int/gpsc/5may/How_To_HandWash_Poster.pdf?ua=1</a>
Handrub	<a href="https://www.who.int/gpsc/5may/How_To_HandRub_Poster.pdf?ua=1">https://www.who.int/gpsc/5may/How_To_HandRub_Poster.pdf?ua=1</a>