

# How to Access Treatment for your Back Pain and Rehabilitation During the COVID-19 Pandemic

By Dr. Connie D'Astolfo, DC, PhD (candidate)

With the COVID-19 pandemic resulting in medical and other clinics closing, substantially reducing clinic hours or health providers suspending their practices, we recognize the difficulty that many are now facing in getting in-person care for your back pain. However, many patients are now contacting their health providers asking about getting a "virtual" appointments over the telephone or over platforms such as skype or face time for video-conferencing.

While the difficulty in getting in-person care with your health provider may ultimately assist in the Province's efforts to manage the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is still remains important for you to get either the right advice "virtually" from your health provider so that they may continue to support your ongoing care or treatment as warranted.

As you may already know, the Government of Ontario recently ordered the closing down of non-essential workplaces as of March 24, 2020. However, the List of Essential Workplaces <https://www.ontario.ca/page/list-essential-workplaces> includes under Section 58 "Health care professionals providing urgent care including dentists, optometrists and physiotherapists." However, this list is not exhaustive and includes other health providers such as chiropractors.

Also, this does not preclude the provision of healthcare services "virtually" either online by e-mail/delivery or through telephone or skype as long as you are a patient and your health provider already has a pre-existing relationship with you which would have included an in-person examination, plan of care and prior informed consent.

With a "virtual" appointment, your health provider may communicate certain information, give advice and recommendations as part of your ongoing care plan and informed consent. At the end of the day, connecting virtually, may be an effective way for your health provider to continue to monitor your health condition safely and provide continuity of care.

On the other hand, please bear in mind that what constitutes urgent/emergency care is largely dependent on your health provider's knowledge, skill and judgment in each case. During this COVID-19 pandemic, it may be that your health provider will have to weigh the value of an in-person appointment vs the risk when physically seeing a patient.

## URGENT CARE AT SPINEgroup

As an "essential service in Ontario", SPINEgroup® will continue to provide treatment for urgent cases **in person** and through a **virtual care platform**. Patients experiencing significant pain or a sudden and debilitating change in functional abilities due to their injury to their neck, back or extremities will continue to have access to in person care. Those with flare up with vertigo will also have continued in person treatment.

Dear Patient and Community

Chiropractic care is an essential part of our community and we want to assure you that we will continue to provide services during this stressful time.

As an "essential service in Ontario" we will continue to provide treatment for urgent cases in clinic and through a virtual care platform. Patients experiencing significant pain or a sudden and debilitating change in functional abilities due to their injury to their neck, back or extremities will continue to have access to care. In-person care will also extend to patients with flare up of vertigo or vestibular issues.

For in clinic or virtual care appointments please use our online appointment booking or send an email to [info@spinegroup.ca](mailto:info@spinegroup.ca) or call clinic at 905-850-7746. For those with extended benefits we have confirmed with insurers that your virtual care will be covered.

We continue to take all necessary precautions for the safety of our staff and patients. **If you have travelled within the last 2 weeks, come in contact with anyone diagnosed with coronavirus and/or you are feeling sick with fever and/or cough please stay home.**

For your protection, all staff and patients are screened for any signs of infection including temperature readings. Patients and staff are required to remove outdoor shoes and use hand sanitizers upon entry into our clinic. Patients will be asked to maintain a safe distance from one another and our clinicians are required to use masks during patient encounters. Hand sanitizers are available throughout the clinic for your use.

Due to the COVID-19 crisis, we have made the decision to close our clinic temporarily for OHIP funded physiotherapy until April 4, 2020.

We will reopen Monday April 6, 2020. During our closure we will still be accepting referrals from your physicians and individual requests for registration by fax or email. Once requests are received you will be placed in a cue and notified for registration immediately upon our return.

Healthy Regards

Dr. Connie D'Astolfo SPINEgroup, Director  
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**SPINEgroup® is pleased to announce the expansion of our Pain Management team, with our physician, Dr. George Gale, MD. Our physician will provide medication counseling and management and assessments.**

### MORE TIPS FOR ACCESSING PUBLICLY FUNDED (OHIP) PHYSIOTHERAPY WITHOUT DELAY:

- Get a written referral from your Family Doctor or Nurse Practitioner.
- Ask your Family Doctor or Nurse Practitioner to FAX us the referral.
- Before enrolling, always inquire about Wait Times when accessing OHIP physiotherapy.
- Please ensure all required forms are completed during registration
- Always bring your valid Ontario Health Card and other required identification.
- If necessary, please make all Transportation arrangements in advance.
- If necessary, please ensure you have a language translator.
- Always arrive on time for any appointment.
- Always do any home exercises given to you at any time by your therapist.

### Clinical Programs @ SPINEgroup!

- (1) Community Physiotherapy Clinic (OHIP)
- (2) Ontario "Bundled Care" Physiotherapy
- (3) GLA:D Hip and Knee Rehabilitation
- (4) Rapid Access Clinic for Low Back Pain
- (5) Medical Pain Management
- (6) WSIB Rehab
- (7) MVA Rehab

**SPINEgroup®: Dedicated to Excellence for Spine Care**

**"Highly recommended and referred by medical physicians across the Greater Toronto Area"**

SPINEgroup® Vaughan Clinic is located at Unit 1, 7611 Pine Valley Drive, Woodbridge, Ontario, L4L 0A2 centrally located at the southeast corner of Highway 7 & Pine Valley Drive in the corner unit located next to TD BANK. Parking is free.

### Our Unique Clinical Programs

**Spine Care Program, Spinal Stenosis Boot Camp; GLA:D Hip and Knee OA**

The Spine Care program has a high success rate for complex spinal injuries and conditions including spinal stenosis, scoliosis, herniated and bulging discs, moderate to severe disc degeneration, with on our evidence based, team modelled and self-management approach. In the case of scoliosis, management typically includes



spinal manipulation and evidence-based scoliosis specific rehabilitation. In most cases patients are able to receive reimbursement for the program cost through their extended benefit insurance plans. Patients thereafter will receive assessments (in person or through teleconference) every year to ensure continued compliance, motivation and clinical outcomes. Your medical physician will receive reports on your progress.

**Spinal Stenosis Boot Camp** is delivered in a group setting over 6-8 weeks to address the specific rehab needs for this chronic condition. Cost of program is covered through your health insurance plans.

**GLA:D Program for Hip and Knee Osteoarthritis** is internationally recognized and delivered in a group setting with individualized therapy for hip and knee osteoarthritis for all ages. Cost of program is covered through your health insurance plans

→ For clinical program information please contact us at 905-850-7746 or email at: [info@spinegroup.ca](mailto:info@spinegroup.ca).



Scan with your smart phone to connect directly to our website.

### OHIP PHYSIOTHERAPY @ SPINEgroup

To be eligible for one-to-one OHIP physiotherapy, each patient must meet enrollment criteria (e.g. aged 65 years and older, aged 19 years and younger, post-hospitalization, ODSP, OW, etc.)

SENIORS (65+),  
CHILDREN (UNDER 19),  
POST HOSPITALIZATION,  
ODSP/OW

Call: 905-850-7746

Languages Spoken include Italian, Spanish, Hindi