

**From:** CASLPO <caslpo@caslpo.com>

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**Subject:** High Risk Areas of Practice for Registrants - March 27, 2020



College of Audiologists and  
Speech-Language Pathologists of Ontario  
Ordre des audiologistes et  
des orthophonistes de l'Ontario

March 27, 2020

**To:** All CASLPO Registrants (*Please share with CASLPO Colleagues*)

Specific concerns have been raised about the risk of contracting COVID-19 when performing transnasal and transoral endoscopy for swallowing and voice assessments, providing care for patients with tracheostomies, laryngectomies and other aerosol generating procedures.

The advice from the government of Ontario for all patient care is to determine if the assessment or treatment is essential or non-essential ([Essential and Non Essential Services Communication](#)). This decision is especially important in this area of practice and will be made according to the needs and circumstances of each patient.

If the patient's needs are essential, and you are going to proceed with intervention, follow all infection prevention and control recommendations specified by your hospital, other place of work and from [Public Health Ontario](#).

The Canadian Society of Otolaryngology - Head and Neck Surgery have provided recommendations for physicians providing service in this area, many of which can apply to SLPs.  
<https://www.entcanada.org/news-events/covid-19-alerts/>

### **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)**

We have been made aware that many hospital Infection Prevention and Control departments are providing healthcare workers, including SLPs, with appropriate information about the types of Personal Protective Equipment for patients with COVID-19 and patients under investigation (PUI) and how to use them appropriately.

Public Health Ontario have also just released a brief on PPE

[Updated IPAC Recommendations for Use of Personal Protective Equipment for Care of Individuals with Suspect or Confirmed COVID-19](#)

The shortage of PPE is an issue being dealt with now in many different practice settings. There is a point of contact at the government level if your site is experiencing shortages in PPE [EOCLogistics.MOH@ontario.ca](mailto:EOCLogistics.MOH@ontario.ca).

It is important to assess the appropriate need for PPE because not every patient care contact requires PPE. We recommend you follow advice from your hospital's or employer's infection prevention and control department.

If no PPE is available, and the swallowing assessment or treatment is essential, consider the risk factors to you, the health professional. If the risks of potentially transmitting COVID-19 are too high, and you cannot adapt the assessment or treatment to mitigate the risk, then discuss the situation with your manager.

If you have questions, please contact us at: [Practice Advice Team](#)

Brian O'Riordan  
Registrar

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