

COVID 19: NARCH - GOOD PRACTICE AND SAFE BEHAVIOURS FOR HYDROTHERAPY

DATED : 12TH MAY 2020

At the time of writing it is advised that the following good practice and safe behaviours should be followed by all NARCH Hydrotherapy Centres and Registered Canine Hydrotherapists. Please note this is not an exhaustive list.

1. Before you consider re-opening, you should check first with your Local Council and your Insurance providers that it is in order for you to do so. You may also wish to check the number of reported Covid-19 cases within your area to establish if you are in a high risk area which may influence your decision to re-open.
2. All centres should treat urgent cases only where welfare issues are, or may become apparent. Record the treatment decision made with regard to welfare, and retain on the patients file for future reference.
3. All centres must ensure that patient files show clear records of decisions and your risk assessment procedures, as well as normal treatment records.
4. Carry out an initial Covid-19 risk assessment for each patient and client and then re-assess for any changes at each subsequent appointment.
5. Before arranging treatment, all clients must be made aware of the centre's appointment safety protocols for when they are at the centre and agree to abide by these.
6. Before arranging treatment, ensure your clients are aware and agree that it will be their decision and responsibility to make what could be classified as "non-essential travel" when they attend their hydrotherapy appointment. Any fines imposed on clients by any Authority as a result of such travel will be their responsibility. You may wish to obtain a disclaimer from clients on this point.
7. Ensure all staff and client contact and emergency information is up to date.
8. Advice regarding the wearing of PPE is ever changing. Check government guidelines for the most up to date information and review your own protocols to take any new advice into consideration.
9. Any staff member or client from a household where there is a case or symptoms of Covid-19, or who is self-isolating, should not attend the centre.
10. Social distancing of two metres to be followed at all times.
11. Treadmill treatments should be considered with care as urgent cases will most probably require at least two hydrotherapists to carry out treatment and as such, social distancing of two metres between hydrotherapists would be extremely difficult, or impossible, to ensure.

12. If you are operating with two or more hydrotherapists/staff in the centre, you must ensure that they are kept safe using social distancing. If you are operating with only one hydrotherapist, this one person will need to be responsible for all tasks within the centre and they must therefore give due consideration to their own personal safety, for example, can emergencies be adequately dealt with, bearing in mind social distancing requirements.
13. Where ever possible, owners are to remain in their car and the dog collected and returned following treatment. The owner must have previously removed their own collars and leads and the hydrotherapist will replace these with those belonging to the centre before treatment.
14. Consider setting up a safe holding pen/area or tie up point outside the centre where the owner delivers their dog and removes their collar and lead. The hydrotherapist collects the dog and puts on the centre's collar and lead.
15. Where possible, only one owner to bring the dog to the centre. Any queuing at the centre should comply with government guidelines.
16. Waiting rooms and reception areas are to be closed to clients and the public.
17. Disinfect all collars, leads, jackets, harnesses, equipment with a suitable strength virucide before re-use.
18. The use of blasters and air dryers is not recommended as this could help spread any virus.
19. Ask owners to towel dry their own dogs elsewhere and away from the centre. It is important that cars are not allowed to remain parked at your centre for drying purposes, to preserve the "one client at a time" concept and social distancing.
20. Use only centre toys and equipment which must be disinfected with an appropriate virucide after each use.
21. If owners enter the centre all possible touch points must be treated with a virucide of suitable strength following treatment before anyone else may enter.
22. Suitably spaced appointments must be adhered to. This will allow time for no queues to build up in the centre car parking area and will allow the centre time to disinfect all collars, leads, toys, jackets, equipment and touch points, before each new appointment.
23. All correspondence, e.g. vet referrals, insurance claims, to be non-paper based and payments to be electronic. Payments can be taken over telephone.

Note: Chlorine and bromine are very effective at destroying the virus but ensure all staff and any clients entering the building wash their hands in soap and water for 20 seconds or use a 70% alcohol hand-rub before and after each treatment.