



COVID-19 and Hearing Implants

Guidelines – Returning to Practice

Status Report
(Aug 1 – Sep 15, 2020)

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Three relevant guidance were released or with essential updates during the reporting period:

[Criteria for Return to Work for Healthcare Personnel with SARS-CoV-2 Infection \(Interim Guidance\)](#)

Published by CDC on July 17, 2020.

Decisions about return to work for Healthcare Personnel (HCP) with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 should be made in the context of local circumstances. This updated guidance includes the following:

- Except for rare situations, a test-based strategy is no longer recommended to determine when to allow HCP to return to work.
- For HCP with severe to critical illness or who are severely immunocompromised, the recommended duration for work exclusion was extended to 20 days after symptom onset (or, for asymptomatic severely immunocompromised HCP, 20 days after their initial positive SARS-CoV-2 diagnostic test).

[Audiology and otology guidance during Covid-19](#)

Published by BAA, BSA, BSHAA, on June 1, 2020, reviewed on **June 30** and to be further reviewed on Aug 30.

This guidance highlighted a phased return to routine assessment and provided clearer instructions on some procedures and scenarios. This guideline could be used as the basis from which a local protocol can be developed for the practices. It is supposed to be regularly reviewed and updated. Currently, the valid version is based on a review on June 30th. The main change is a return to routine appointments following UK government's change in alert level, with interesting opinions/instructions related to the risks of coughing, wax removal, room ventilation etc.

[Guidance for return to practice for Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery](#)

The AAO-HNS, with the collaboration of the otolaryngology specialty societies, has developed recommendations for a safe return to practice that are being presented in two parts. These will be "living documents" that will be updated on a regular basis as new information becomes available. Resources include downloadable PDFs, podcasts, and video versions of each podcast.

- [Part One](#), released on **May 7**, contains comprehensive general considerations that are applicable to all practice settings and specialty areas of otolaryngologists' practice. **Page 6 was updated on July 1, 2020**, to include testing guidelines from the Infectious Diseases Society of America.
- [Part Two](#), released on **May 15**, contains specific recommendations encompassing prioritization and special circumstances related to surgical procedures for all specialty areas.

In addition, some other earlier released guidance links are included here as reference as well:

[Assessing the evidence base for medical procedures which create a higher risk of respiratory infection transmission from patient to healthcare worker](#)

Released by NHS National Services Scotland on **May 12, 2020**.

This guidance provided definitions on which procedures, demonstrated through evidence, generate a significantly high number of respirable aerosols/droplets; and are associated with a higher incidence of healthcare worker acute respiratory infection. It was identified that **no evidence of increased risk** of COVID transmission associated with the following procedures:

- bone drilling,
- irrigation during surgery,
- nasoendoscopy,
- nose and throat swabbing, surgical procedures in head and neck area not involving the respiratory tract, paranasal sinuses or oral cavity
- Administration of nebulized saline, medication or drugs

[Audiology Services During & After Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)

Released by BAA, BSA, BSHAA, Updated on **June 1, 2020**.

This guideline provides information on how to adapt services in both clinics and home visits in UK. Especially, it defines **remote services** that are provided by audiologists:

- Hearing aid replacement/upgrade for existing device wearers.
- Pre-programmed hearing aids and delivery service.
- Adjustments.
- Repair drop off service.
- Aftercare support.
- Tinnitus support.
- Follow-up assessments.

[A Graduated Return to Elective ENT within the COVID-19 Pandemic](#)

Published by ENT UK, on **June 3, 2020**.

It is the Part 3 of the "Exiting the pandemic" guidance series. It contains more elaborate and specific recommendations encompassing all our areas of practice including outpatient work, procedures and surgery in all specialty areas.