

COVID-19

GUIDANCE

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FOR: Thermal establishments

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COVID-19 was considered a Pandemic on March 11, 2020 by the World Health Organization. In Portugal, Public Health measures have been implemented according to the various stages of preparation and response to the epidemiological situation, in order to progressively decrease transmission of the virus, providing adequate health care to all patients and protecting public health.

COVID-19 is a disease caused by infection with the new Coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2). The disease is predominantly manifested by respiratory symptoms, namely fever, cough and difficulty breathing, and there may also be other symptoms, including odynophagia (sore throat) and generalized muscle pain.

Based on current scientific evidence, this virus is mainly transmitted through:

- A. Direct contact: dissemination of respiratory droplets, produced when an infected person coughs, sneezes or speaks, which can be inhaled or land in the mouth, nose or eyes of people who are close (<2 meters);
- B. Indirect contact: contact of hands with a surface or object contaminated with SARS-CoV-2 and then with the mouth, nose or eyes.

In the course of their activity, Thermal Spas - establishments providing health care - obey a hygiene, disinfection and monitoring protocol, complying with the quality control programs established by the Directorate-General for Health and the Regional Health Authorities.

For this purpose, the Spa has professionals qualified to adopt the necessary procedures to act on the infection control and the minimization of risks for thermalists and collaborators.

Thermal practice presupposes adequate medical prescription and surveillance. Thus, the indication and contraindication of thermal treatments always results from clinical criteria, where acute clinical situations, by themselves, make thermal practice unfeasible.

In early March 2020, in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and following the guidelines of the

General Directorate of Health and the local Health Authorities, the Thermal Baths (in operation) prepared Contingency Plans where procedures for action, prevention, care and surveillance, specific to COVID-19, were defined.

In this context, additional preventive measures were defined, namely: in the admission of spa therapists, suspension of treatments and indicators of maximum frequency of spa therapists per treatment period / area. The hygiene procedures of the facilities and equipment, the hygiene protocol (pre and post treatment) and the recommendations of social conduct of the spa were also reinforced.

In the course of the evolution of the epidemiological situation COVID-19, all thermal establishments took the initiative to suspend activity in the second week of March 2020. The suspension of the activity of thermal establishments was a measure of adherence to the generalized strategy of social eviction for the fighting the pandemic.

In view of the reopening of thermal establishments, the usual legal and regulatory procedures are complied with (namely the procedures for sanitary inspection and surveillance of facilities and equipment by the Clinical Directors and the fulfilment of analytical programs).

The purpose of this Guideline is to define the procedures to be adopted for the reopening and operation of thermal establishments in the current epidemic phase of COVID-19, as an additional instrument for complying with the rules and legal provisions in force. This Guideline may be revised at any time, depending on scientific knowledge and the evolution of the epidemiological situation.

Under the terms of paragraph a) of no. 2 of article 2 of Regulatory Decree no. 14/2012, of 26 January, the following Guideline is issued:

Preparation of the Spa before Opening

1. All thermal establishments must be properly prepared to deal with suspected cases of COVID-19, as well as to prevent and minimize the transmission of this disease, by activating and updating their Contingency Plans.
2. The Contingency Plans referred to in the previous point must be prepared in accordance with Guideline 006/2020 of the Directorate-General for Health (DGS), contemplating:
 - a. The procedures to be adopted in a suspected case of COVID-19;
 - b. The definition of an isolation area, where it is possible to have access to a telephone, and where there is a chair, water and some non-perishable food, as well as, access to sanitary facilities, if possible;
 - c. The circuits necessary for the suspected case to arrive and leave the isolation area;
 - d. The updating of the emergency contacts of the local authorities (Firefighters, Health Authority, SNS 24 - 808 24 24

- e. The management of human resources in order to provide substitutions in the event of absenteeism due to illness, including the need for isolation, or to provide care to family members.
3. Training and training must be provided to all workers regarding the Contingency Plan and the COVID-19 transmission prevention and control measures.
 4. All thermalists must be informed about the rules of conduct in the space and the measures to prevent and control the transmission of COVID-19. This information must be posted in places that are easy for users to see, including at the entrance to the thermal establishments.
 5. All thermal establishments must ensure that the necessary conditions exist to adopt the recommended preventive measures:
 - a. Sanitary facilities with water, liquid soap with a dosing device and single-use paper towels, for the promotion of good hygiene practices, of the hands;
 - b. Collection of waste, at least daily;
 - c. Material for proper disinfection and cleaning procedures for thermal establishments, according to DGS Guideline 014/2020;
 - d. Personal protective equipment (PPE), such as masks, for all workers;
 - e. Alcohol-based solution (SABA) dispensers for people to disinfect their hands at the entrance and exit of the thermal establishment and in other places previously defined according to the respective use and frequency of users.

General Prevention and Control Measures

Without prejudice to the particular measures of each thermal establishment, to be defined by the respective Administration and Clinical Management, the following must be considered:

1. Ensure that all professionals are informed (including education and training) about the Contingency Plan and the respective procedures.
2. Place signs designed to reinforce the importance of respiratory etiquette, physical distance, hand hygiene and the use of a mask, which must be present in all areas of use / circulation of spa professionals, through the posting of posters (Annex I, II and III) or other information dissemination support.
3. Ensure ease of access, in all areas, the alcohol-based solution (SABA), as well as reinforcing information for washing hands with soap and drying with paper towels for single use.
4. Provide a surgical mask (if the user does not have a mask) and alcohol-based solution (SABA) at the entrance of the spa. The mask must be used within the entire thermal space, including in the waiting or reception room, and can only be removed when the user is in the consultation room and during the thermal treatments, if necessary.
5. Prior booking of consultations and thermal treatments in a non-face-to-face manner to avoid having users in the waiting room.

6. Remove magazines, leaflets and other objects (coffee machines, etc. ...) from the waiting room that can be handled by several people.
7. Guarantee a reduction in the number of spa operators so that, in all activities, the recommended physical distance of at least 2 meters between them is maximized.
8. Ensure the maintenance of physical distance in common areas by defining the maximum number of authorized spa specialists in each common area (such as waiting rooms, rest rooms, and changing rooms) and adjusting the opening hours. When it is not possible to respect the physical distance, alternative measures should be implemented to protect the thermalists and workers, such as, for example, the use of glass or acrylic separation panels and the use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).
9. Organize schedules and circuits in order to avoid crossing between people.
10. Ensure adequate ventilation of all spaces, favouring natural ventilation and based on Ordinance No. 353-A / 2013, of 4 December.
11. Increase the number of air changes per hour and the supply of the largest possible amount of outside air, either through natural or mechanical ventilation (depending on the thermal establishment).
12. Ensure ventilation / ventilation of the treatment rooms for at least one hour at the end of each treatment / operation period.
13. Reinforce cleaning and disinfection services in spaces and objects of greater contact and circulation (bathrooms, corridors, changing rooms, waiting rooms, chairs and armrests, table tops, switches, handrails, taps, buttons for elevators, door handles). All thermal equipment must be cleaned and disinfected after each use, in accordance with DGS Guideline 014/2020.
14. Ensure that all employees use the Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) appropriate to their tasks and in accordance with what is defined by the respective Services Occupational Health and Safety / Occupational Health, according to DGS Standard 007/2020.
15. Ensure that users

Specific Prevention and Control Measures

Admission of the Spa

1. When making an appointment, prior non-face-to-face screening should be carried out, with a maximum of 72 hours before and by questionnaire:
 - a. Ask about the presence in the last 14 days of acute respiratory symptoms with cough (again or worsening of the usual cough), and / or fever (temperature $\geq 38.0^{\circ}\text{C}$), and / or dyspnoea / difficulty breathing. Other symptoms suggestive of COVID-19, such as generalized muscle pain, headache (headache), weakness, odynophagia, and, less frequently, nausea / vomiting and diarrhoea, may also be considered, with appropriate clinical judgment.
 - b. Question whether you have been in contact with a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-

19 in the last 14 days;

c. If the therapist reports symptoms suggestive of COVID-19, inform that you should contact the SNS24 Line (808 24 24 24), in accordance with DGS Standard 004/2020.

2. When making an appointment, the spa practitioners should be informed that:

a. Only low-risk thermalists (without symptoms and without close contact with a suspected or confirmed case) will be accepted for the consultation and / or thermal treatment;

b. During the performance of the thermal treatment, the thermalists must perform the self-monitoring of the symptoms mentioned above before leaving home, without prejudice to their repetition upon entering the thermal establishment. The verification of any of the symptoms suggestive of COVID-19 implies the suspension of treatment;

c. The use of a mask is mandatory when circulating and staying in the spa.

Thermal Consultation

1. The thermal consultations are scheduled by appointment, not in person, in order to guarantee compliance with the physical distance and the ideal occupation capacity of the facilities.

2. In the course of the diagnostic evaluation, a questionnaire must be made by a doctor for the COVID-19 risk classification.

3. Spa therapists should be informed of the imperative need to notify the spa immediately if they experience symptoms suggestive of COVID-19 or if they receive a positive result in a laboratory test for SARS-CoV-2.

4. Considering the forms of transmission of COVID-19 and the assessment and analysis of the risk of contagion, collective practices and, in particular, emanatory, invasive ENT techniques and spraying techniques (pharyngeal and facial) should be suspended. Regarding enteroclysis, the criteria referred to in DGS Standard 012/2020, regarding endoscopy / colonoscopy, must be observed.

5. Regarding indoor pools and gyms, Guideline 030/2020 DGS should be followed.

6. Medical offices must be equipped in such a way that medical acts are carried out safely, namely with regard to PPE, in accordance with DGS Standard 007/2020.

7. Procedures for cleaning surfaces and diagnostic equipment, as well as ventilation of offices, must be reinforced.

Realization of Thermal Techniques

1. The scheduling of thermal techniques must guarantee the time necessary for full compliance with the hygiene and ventilation protocol of the cabins.

2. All treatments are monitored by the thermal operator, avoiding contact with surfaces and unnecessary circulation of spa professionals as much as possible.
3. Companions will not be admitted, except for reasons of force majeure duly validated by the hydrologist.
4. All areas must have the necessary PPE for professionals and waste containers of non-manual opening, lined inside with a plastic bag of a color appropriate to the type of waste produced (Order No. 242/98 of 13 August) .
5. Waiting rooms must comply with physical distance measures.

Circuits of People and Goods

6. Circulation in the treatment areas must be carried out using “shoe covers” or with slippers for single and exclusive use. The circuits must guarantee physical distance.
7. Circulation in changing rooms must comply with physical distance and lockers must be sanitized between uses.
8. Workers must circulate with clothing and shoes for exclusive use in the dressing room.
9. The textiles used in the thermal treatments (sheets, towels and robes, etc.) are provided by the thermal establishment.
10. Disposable consumables / medical devices for single use after use and the remaining waste produced, must be packed in waste containers of non-manual opening, lined inside with a plastic bag of a color appropriate to the type of waste produced (Order no. 242/98 of August 13). These residues must be collected at the end of each treatment cycle and transported in a sealed bag, never exceeding 1/3 of its capacity. Residues should never be pressed on, nor should the bag be squeezed to vent the air.
11. Waste containers must be sanitized according to the cleaning and disinfection procedures defined in DGS Guideline 014/2020.
12. Workers responsible for collecting waste and cleaning containers must use appropriate PPE, following the recommendations of the respective Health and Safety at Work / Occupational Health Services.
13. Gloves, masks and other protective materials must be placed in the respective waste container and must never be placed in the selective collection container or in the recycling bin, even if they are not contaminated.

Complementary Areas

1. Whenever the laundry is internal, adequate PPE for workers must be guaranteed, following the recommendations of the respective Health and Safety at Work / Occupational Health Services. The laundry must be placed directly in the washing machine.

2. The laundry must be washed at the highest temperature it can withstand (depending on the thermoresistance) - heat disinfection cycle (at least at 60°C for 30 minutes, or between 80-90°C, with 10 minutes of heat contact with the laundry)).
3. If the laundry cannot be washed hot, it must be washed in the machine at a temperature between 30-40°C and with a final disinfection cycle in the machine, with a disinfectant suitable for this type of laundry and compatibility with the machine.
4. In the absence of a laundry / washing machine, the clothes must be packed and packed in a waterproof bag, closing it tightly, taking it to the laundry and depositing the clothes directly into the washing machine.
5. Establishments with cafeteria / bar services or merchandising stores must follow DGS Guideline 023/2020 and 014/2020.

Human Resources

1. All professionals should receive training and training on the actions and measures to be taken in case a spa or worker has symptoms suggestive of COVID-19.
2. Training should be provided on changes to maintenance plans and hygiene protocols, as well as on the treatment of cleaning equipment, waste management, laundry services and personal hygiene after maintenance / cleaning operations.

Information

The implementation of all COVID-19 prevention and control measures must be reflected in the respective internal documents of each thermal establishment, namely: operating operating model; internal regulations; hygiene and disinfection plan; maintenance plan; and COVID-19 contingency plan.

Communication

Official

1. Under the terms of article 7 of Decree-Law no. 142/2004, of 11 June, the thermal establishment must collaborate with health authorities in all actions and measures to mitigate the risk of transmission, as well as information and raising the community's awareness of compliance.
2. In addition to the opening report, pursuant to article 8, paragraph h), of Decree-Law No. 142/2004, of 11 June, the Clinical Director is responsible for reporting any occurrence of public health risk.

Internal

1. All the human resources of the thermal establishment must know the symptoms of COVID-19 and be informed about all measures to prevent and control the risk of transmission.
2. All changes made to the internal documents must be timely and duly communicated to all the human resources of the thermal establishment.

External (Thermalists)

1. Before going to the thermal establishment, the thermalists should receive information on the guidelines in force issued by the local public health authorities, as well as on the specific measures put in place in the thermal establishment (namely the treatment techniques not available).
2. Spa therapists should be informed that if they experience symptoms compatible with COVID-19 or have been in contact with a person with COVID-19 during the thermal treatment, it will be suspended.
3. Specific information (information infographics or other information support) about the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and what to do if they manifest symptoms should be posted / made available in public access spaces and at the entrance of the thermal establishment.
4. Information (infographics of information or other information dissemination support) should be posted / made available in public access spaces and at the entrance of the thermal establishment, aimed at reinforcing the importance of respiratory etiquette, hand hygiene, physical distance and use of a mask (if your clinical condition permits).

Performance before a Suspicious Case during a Thermal Treatment

1. When a suspicious case is identified, it must be sent to the isolation area, using the circuits defined in the Contingency Plan.
2. The relatives of the spa owner or the employee of a suspected case should be contacted immediately. The person suspected of COVID-19 should contact the SNS 24 (808 24 24 24), which can also be done on the spot.
3. The Local Health Authority must be immediately informed of the suspected case, as well as of its contacts, in order to facilitate the application of Public Health measures to close contacts. For this purpose, the thermal establishments must keep the contact details of the territorially competent Health Authorities updated.
4. In the situation of the confirmed case, it must be:
 - a. Provided for the cleaning and disinfection of the “isolation” area;
 - b. Enhanced cleaning and disinfection, especially of surfaces frequently handled and which were most used by the patient. Special attention should be paid to cleaning and disinfecting the places where the patient circulated / remained, including materials and equipment used by the patient and / or most likely to be contaminated;

c. Patient waste produced in the “isolation” area must be collected separately, by professionals with the appropriate PPE and sent to a licensed operator for the management of hospital waste with biological risk (Group III, dispatch no. 242/96 of 13 August).

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ORIENTATION DRAWING GROUP

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