

ROADMAP TO REOPENING

BROUGHT TO YOU BY THE VSP GLOBAL PREMIER PROGRAM



Prepare Your Office for Reopening

Following guidance from the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) (CDC) and the [American Optometric Association](#) (AOA), and with feedback from doctors like you, the VSP Global® Premier Program has prepared the following suggestions for consideration as providers prepare to reopen their practices.

The needs and circumstances of each practice vary. This document is intended to be a resource to help guide the reopening process. It offers tips, suggestions, and best practices to protect the health and safety of doctors, patients, and staff. As always, eye care professionals should refer to federal, state, and local government and associations for official rules and regulations related to COVID-19.

This document is designed to outline a reopening journey, walking practices through the phases of reopening.

Phases of Reopening

1. Prepare your office for reopening
2. Safely staff your office
3. Prepare staff for reopening
4. Communicate reopening to your patients
5. Safely provide care



1. Prepare Your Office for Reopening

Reopening your practice while focusing on the safety of staff and patients requires considering patient flow and anticipating patient and staff behaviors. This list can help guide your preparation.

Prepare for Social Distancing

- Set up six feet of spacing between chairs in your waiting and reception areas.
- Identify other furniture (including desks) throughout the office that may need to be spaced apart.
- Remove extra chairs in exam lanes and/or space accordingly.
- Set up visual markers on the floor to indicate six feet gap as needed.
- Install custom-fit plexiglass at check-in, checkout, and dispensary desks.
- Identify ALL patient touchpoints in the office and remove nonessential items like toys, magazines, brochures, coffee makers, water stations, etc.
- Set up a hand sanitizer dispenser at the entrance of your practice. You can dedicate a handwashing station if your office layout permits.

Prepare for Sanitization Protocols

- Source and stock cleaning supplies.
- Set up cleaning/sanitization schedules and include designated staff.
- Set up a daily assignment tracker to identify who cleans/wipes down assigned areas in the patient journey following every encounter:
 - Front Desk/Waiting/Reception
 - Pretest
 - Exam Room
 - Optical
 - Restrooms
 - Patient Handoff



2. Safely Staff Your Office

With your office physically prepared for reopening, begin to consider your new patient schedule.

Creating Your Patient Schedule

- Consider the new layout and size of your office to determine the capacity of your waiting area, exam lanes, optical, and total office.
- Use the total office capacity to determine how many patients can be seen per hour and how many people can be in the office at one time. Allow this determination to guide your adjusted doctor and staff schedules.
- Consider how you might use telemedicine services to supplement in-office visits.
- Report your office status to VSP® by filling out this [form](#) so that your practice information is correctly displayed on the vsp.com [Find a Doctor Directory](#), giving VSP members in need of essential care a better understanding of your current operating hours.

Create a Schedule for Dispensing and Adjustments

- Set up a schedule for patient dispensing and frame adjustments, so you can control the flow and capacity in your office.
- Consider scheduling dispensing outside of doctor hours.

Create the Doctor Schedule

- Use the new patient schedule to plan doctors' schedules, including how many doctors are working at one time each day.
- Consider the following:

- What types of exams will you schedule each hour?
- Does the schedule support capacity and flow for social distancing?
- Are there creative scheduling options for two-doctor practices? Can doctors split the day? (e.g., Dr. A works 9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. and Dr. B works 2:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.)
- Should doctor hours be expanded to allow for more spacing between appointments?
- Can you offer extended weekday hours or Saturday appointments if you don't currently do so?



3. Prepare Your Staff for Reopening

Create the Team Schedule

Once you have determined your doctor schedule, evaluate the minimum and the maximum number of staff you will need, while still accounting for patient flow and adequate social distancing.

- Ensure social distancing is possible between staff, not just patients.
- Assign a dedicated person(s) for schedule management.
- Consider staggering or splitting team members on different shifts.
- Be sure to account for exam time and disinfection protocol time when thinking about the total time a staff member will spend with a patient.
- Prepare for the possibility of new assignments for staff to accommodate your new normal.
- Other assigned tasks that are important to consider:
 - Will you need to assign an extra person for phone support?
 - Can anyone work from home to free space for staff who will personally accommodate and face patients in the office? (e.g., coding and billing staff, AP personnel)
 - Should you dedicate staff for curbside services? Many practices are scheduling a curbside patient pickup of materials, based on patient preference.

Communicate Reopening With Your Staff

- Help your staff become comfortable with reentering/expanding patient care.
- Set the rules, share the rules, stick to the plan.
- Set up meetings to discuss strict disinfection protocols.
- Be sure to communicate the need for all staff and doctors to wear a mask or an appropriate cloth covering their faces during hours at the practice.
- Physically walk through the plan with everyone.
- Provide training for your staff on handwashing and using Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). Refer to the [CDC Guide](#) and [Tips and Tricks Guide](#) for more information, and for a list of VSP Global suppliers who have access to PPE.
- Ensure all staff has reviewed the [OSHA guide](#) on PPE.
- Schedule weekly meetings with the whole team to assess processes and procedures.



4. Communicate Your Reopening to Patients

Patient Communications

- Update your website and use patient communication platforms to provide important practice information, including:
 - When you are ready to provide routine services
 - Any modified hours patients will need to know about.
 - Whether telemedicine services are available.
 - That eye care services are available by appointment only at this time.
- Tell patients about the precautions you are taking to keep them safe.
- Access complimentary patient communication materials including social media posts, print-on-demand signages, and other My Marketing Team resources [here](#).

Patient Scheduling and Prescreening

- Email or use your patient communication platform to send patient history forms to patients and instruct them to complete prior to arrival.
- Discuss with patients the need to reschedule their appointment if they develop fever or COVID-19 related symptoms prior to their appointment. Refer to the [CDC Guide](#) for symptoms of coronavirus.
- Consider offering more rescheduling flexibility for patients at this time, such as waiving cancellation fees for those who need to reschedule.



5. Safely Provide Care

Daily Staff Check-in Process

- Schedule a check-in with staff at the start of each shift.
- Staff should arrive wearing a mask.
- Screen all staff for symptoms upon arrival, and consider monitoring their temperature with a non-contact thermometer. Document temperatures.
- Send home any staff member showing signs of COVID-19 or not feeling well.
- Disinfect shoes and don protective clothing as needed.

Daily Sanitization Protocol

- Once every hour, disinfect all surfaces in all rooms and commonly used electronics like tablets and computers.
- Put on new, unused gloves for each patient.
- Staff should not gather in breakrooms or communal areas—these areas should be used by one person at a time. Staff should wash hands before entering and after leaving the space.
- Use disposable items for drinking and eating—no coffee mugs or other items that need to be cleaned or stored.
- Do not use coffee makers or items that require cleaning.
- Wipe down all spaces and patient touchpoints after use.

Daily Staff End-Of-Shift Process

- Disinfect shoes after each shift.
- Remove clothes immediately when arriving home and wash hands thoroughly.
- Consider converting staff attire to scrubs.



5. Safely Provide Care

Patient Check-in Process and Screening

- Consider registering patients and visitors prior to entering the office, including contact information and time of visit. This can be documented electronically or recorded by a staff member to minimize contact with patients.
- Ensure patient is wearing a mask or cloth face covering. Provide one if supplies allow.
 - Patients should be instructed to avoid touching or adjusting their cloth face covering.
 - Patients should wash or sanitize hands before and after donning a mask.
- Instruct patients to use hand sanitizer immediately upon entering or designate a handwashing station if close to entrance.
- Consider screening patients for symptoms upon arrival at the office, including monitoring temperature with a non-contact thermometer. Document temperature in patient's record.
- Patients exhibiting signs of COVID-19 or who don't appear well should be rescheduled.
- Patients wearing gloves upon arrival should be informed that, for their safety and that of staff, they need to remove their gloves and wash or sanitize their hands.
- If patients are not comfortable waiting in the office, recommend that they wait in their vehicle and that the staff will call them when the clinic is ready to see them.
- Provide only necessary paperwork and wipe down clipboard after every patient.
- Sanitize pens or ask patients to use their own.
- Wipe down credit cards if the patient must use them. Patient communication platforms like [Solutionreach](#) may allow patients to pay their copay prior to their visit.

Optical: When Taking Measurements (PD, OC, Pantoscopic Tilt, Vertex)

- Opticians must wear a mask while working with patients.
- Wear gloves and wash hands or use hand sanitizer before and after each patient encounter.
- Disinfect equipment in front of the patient prior to taking measurements.
- Use clean, disinfected pens.
- After the patient visit, wipe down the dispensing table, tools, chair, keyboard, mouse, and all other patient touchpoints.



5. Safely Provide Care

Optical: Dispensing and Adjusting Eyewear

- Opticians must wear a mask at all times not just when working with patients.
- Wear gloves and wash hands before, and after each patient encounter.
- Avoid touching the patient's ears or hair. Ask the patient to hold or move their hair or ears to make observations for adjustments.
- After the patient visit, wipe down the dispensing table, tools, chair, and all other patient touchpoints.
- Post signs in the dispensary indicating that staff will assist patients with frame selection.
- Place all tried-on frames into a tray marked "Needs To Be Sanitized," and transfer to designated areas for cleaning before returning to the frame board.
- Best practices for cleaning frames includes gentle dish soap and lukewarm water or pre-moistened lens cleaning wipes, and using a microfiber cloth to dry. Please refer to the AOA Guide on how to properly sterilize all equipment and materials, including frames.
- Arrange for shipping glasses and contact lenses to the patient's home when possible. Another option is installing an outside lockbox or offering curbside dispensing.



5. Safely Provide Care

PPE and Sanitization Supplies

Consider creating supply kits that can be easily restocked for each workstation in the practice, as needed:

- Face masks
- Hand sanitizer
- Gloves
- Disinfectant
- Alcohol/wipes
- Slip lamp breath shields
- Disposable keyboard skins
- Sanitized/Unsanitized labels
- Dispensing tray liners
- "Sanitized Room" sign

Sanitization Check List

Clean after each use or on an hourly schedule:

- Human-touch surfaces
- Pens
- Clipboards
- Optician tools
- Pupilometer
- Lensometer
- Frame trays
- Interior and external door handles
- Phones
- Front Desk
- Mirrors
- Cabinet and drawer handles
- Water dispensers
- Waiting room furnishings
- Display cases
- Computer equipment, including tablets
- Scanners/Printers/Shredder
- Sink faucet handles and area around sinks
- Microwave and refrigerator (interior and handles)
- Toilets



6. Additional Resources

Below are additional resources for your reference:

[Premier Reopening Resource Guide](#)

[CDC Resource Page: Get Your Clinic Ready for Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\)](#)

[CDC: When and How to Wash Your Hands](#)

[CDC: Cleaning and Disinfection for Community Facilities](#)

[CDC: Interim Guidance for Businesses and Employers to Plan and Respond to Coronavirus Disease](#)

[EPA: Disinfectants for Use Against SARS-CoV-2](#)

[FDA: Guidance on Production of Alcohol-based Hand Sanitizer To Help Boost Supply and Protect Public Health](#)

[OSHA: COVID-19 Resources](#)

Are there other ways we can help? Provide feedback to your VSP representative or email Premier@vsp.com.