



CLINIC | COVID-19 INDIVIDUAL PROTECTION

Returning to in-person individual assistance

By Sara Morais Pinto, ZWL member

Resurfacing from the COVID 19 pandemic, professionals in mental healthcare, various therapies, law firms, among many others beyond the emergency health sector, are rethinking how to guarantee trust, safety and health protection, for both professionals and their customers. We have been witnessing, in most situations, a rush to quick and disposable solutions for individual and personalized protection. In this sense, we believe that further recommendations can offer a responsible and appropriate adjustment to many professional practices, translating on a reduced impact on the ecosystems we are entirely dependent upon.

Taking into account the legal framework required by the General Directorate of Health on this matter, **Zero Waste Lab** is issuing some recommendations for COVID-19 prevention, which we consider simple, practical and efficient, in the context of individualized and face-to-face assistance.

- **DISINFECTANT GEL: Avoid wipes and small single-use, disposable bottles**
 - # Choose to supply hand sanitizing gel in larger quantities to refill dispensers
 - # Coordinate with the supplier the return of larger packaging when exchanging for a new one, also encouraging its reuse
 - # Produce your own disinfectant gel. It's safe, easy and economical
 - # Provide a dispenser at the entrance

- **SHOE PROTECTION: Avoid disposable plastic protections to cover the soles of shoes.** If there is discomfort in asking the customer to be barefoot and leave the shoes at the entrance, we recommend the following options:
 - # Opt for washable and reusable fabric covers, delivered to each customer, for each to care and reuse
 - # Place a mat soaked in disinfectant solution in the entrance area - you can make your own solution



- **SOCIAL MASKS: Avoid disposable surgical masks, required in hospitals and health units.** Wherever the use of the surgical mask is not required, the social masks fulfill the purpose, always articulating with frequent hand washing and physical distancing.
 - # Recommend that each client brings their own
 - # Use and provide reusable fabric social masks
 - # Zero Waste Lab recommends Boo The Bug Social Masks *
- **HAND WASHING: Do not neglect environmental care, namely through the efficient use of water and avoiding soaps with harmful chemicals**
 - # Focus on alerting regarding hand hygiene for at least 20 seconds, also paying attention to water usage, turning off the tap whenever possible.
 - # With a small gesture from each one, it will be easier to guarantee the availability of drinking water for everyone, now and in the future.
- **PROTECTION FOR CHAIRS AND LONGCHAIRS: Do not opt for disposable wipes made from synthetic fabrics**
 - # Use and provide fabric wipes that you can change with each use and wash for reuse
 - # If you choose a disposable option, choose paper towels, biodegradable and with less environmental impact.
- **CARE IN WASTE MANAGEMENT: Do not stop recycling**
 - # Improve on your waste separation for recycling
 - # In the undifferentiated bin, only place what cannot be reused or recycled. Think twice before using it. This is the waste that will have the greatest impact on our ecosystems, destined for landfill or incineration. You should use a closed container.



In this period of crisis, which calls for the organization and cooperation of all, for the good management of resources and that returns, very clearly, the impact that each gesture has on the well-being of the collective, we feel that the values until now brought to public discussion by NGOs - preservation of the ecosystem, interdependence between species, efficient management of resources - are now not only a topic of public conversation, but a necessary requirement for maintaining quality of life and health. This tragic situation, therefore, provides a window of opportunity to disseminate these concepts and practices and to influence other spheres that, apparently distant, are intimately connected with the well-being and global quality of life - health, environmental quality, food and economic security, social justice, access to culture, among many others. Zero Waste Lab invites, and is available to accompany, the reflection and brave standing during this difficult period, yet one of opportunity for the transition to a global health and environmental ethics.

Zero Waste Lab is a non-profit association, founded in 2017, with the mission of promoting the Zero Waste concept and contributing to sustainability, regeneration and transition towards a future without waste.

Embracing zero waste as a philosophy, inspired by nature's ability to transform what does not serve one as food for another, means going beyond minimizing the negative impact, and seeking a regenerative and positive legacy participation.

The focus is on the mitigation of waste production and intervention throughout the life cycle of services and materials, but also on the power of influence of each in its sphere as a mobilizer of citizenship and sustainability. Movement generates movement.

DGS INFORMATION IN CONTEXT COVID-19

<https://www.dgs.pt/directrizes-da-dgs/orientacoes-e-circulares-informativas/orientacao-n-0142020-de-21032020-pdf.aspx>

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