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Hair salons and barbershops are reopening — but your visit won't be the same



BY [LAURA HENSLEY](#) - GLOBAL NEWS

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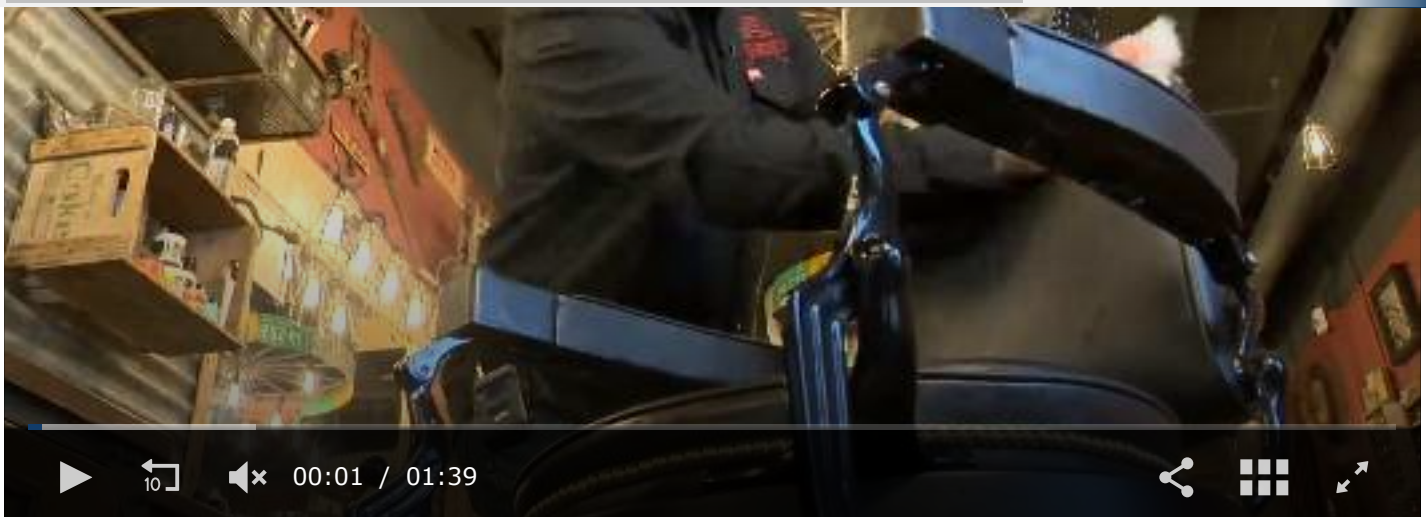
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Salons in parts of Canada can reopen in the coming days, as [coronavirus](#)

closures begin to loosen across the country.

Salons in Manitoba recently got the [green light to reopen](#), as the province hasn't been hit as hard by the pandemic.

In B.C., [hair salons, barbershops](#) and other personal services are able to reopen after the May long weekend, as cases of the novel coronavirus continue to trend downward in the province. In Alberta, salons are able to reopen as early as May 14, Premier Jason Kenny said — which has [concerned many stylists](#).

Salon workers are asking plenty of questions on the [Beauty Council of Western Canada's Facebook page](#), such as where guidelines are coming from, if approvals are needed and how to protect yourself from exposure when cutting someone's hair.

They also want to know if reopening is safe.

[READ MORE: Confusion among hairstylists as to how B.C. salons will reopen under COVID-19](#)

“It can be done safely — but it has to be done mindfully and carefully,” said Colin Furness, a professor at the Institute of Health Policy, Management and Evaluation at the University of Toronto.

To minimize risks and ensure safety for both clients and hair stylists, effective prevention measures and ongoing monitoring are key to reopening, he said.

Todd Coleman, an assistant professor in the department of health sciences at Wilfrid Laurier University in Ontario, said slowing the spread of [COVID-19](#) requires coming in contact with as few people as possible.

Reopening hair salons and barbershops goes against that very idea, he

said.

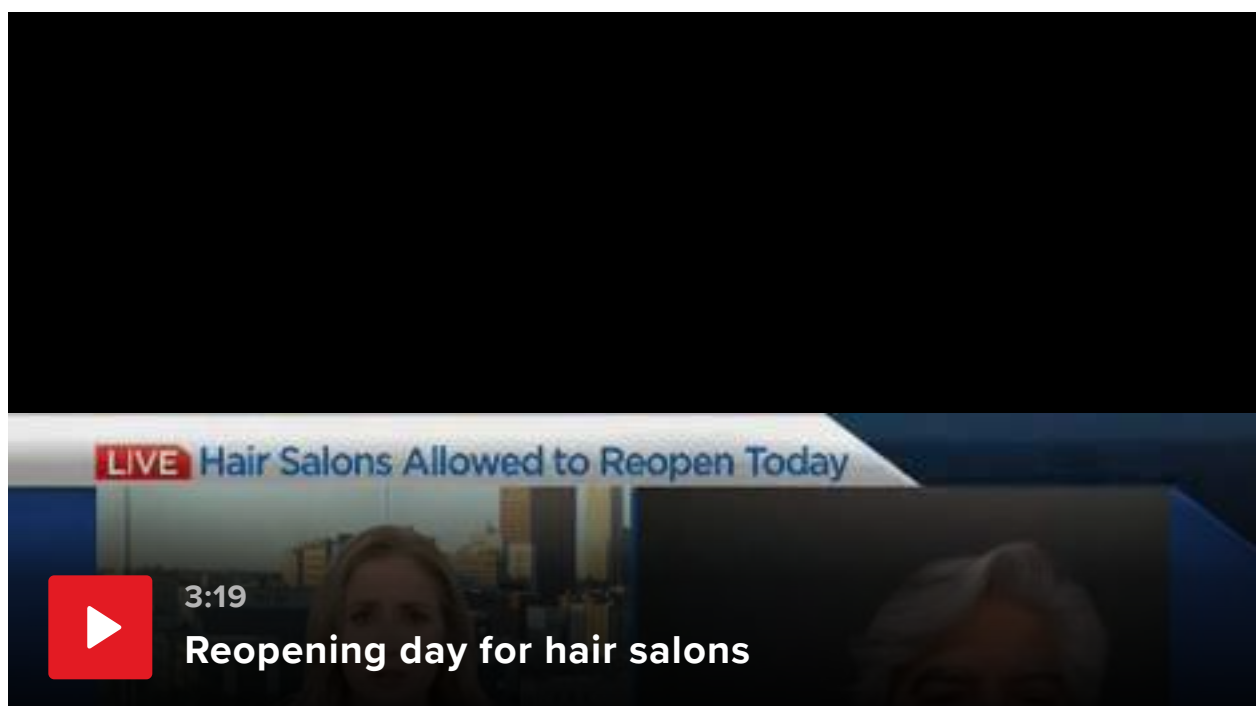
“I don't feel that reopening hair salons or barbershops is a very prudent way of trying to prevent people from coming into contact with each other,” Coleman said.

Limiting customers and services

In salons or barbershops — especially small ones — tight quarters are common, and styling hair often requires close and prolonged contact.

According to Dr. Stan Houston, a professor of medicine and public health at the University of Alberta, there might be a higher potential of COVID-19 transmission in salons given that “closer personal contact seems unavoidable by the nature of the work.”

However, he said, there are “so many unknowns in terms of our knowledge of when transmission is actually occurring and uncertainties in terms of peoples' rigour in applying preventive measures that only time will tell.”



— Reopening day for hair salons

Alain Audet, the executive director of Canada's [Allied Beauty Association \(ABA\)](#), said the association is working with local governments to help draft guidelines on best practices for salons. The ABA also operates as a resource for stylists, updating its site to reflect [current policies](#) across the country.

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There is no one Canada-wide approach to reopening salons. Some provinces, [like Manitoba](#) and [Saskatchewan](#), have published guidelines for salons and barbershops, with rules including reducing the number of clients in the salon at a time, spacing out appointments to ensure enough time for cleaning, and requiring both staff and clients to use the COVID-19 self-screening tool before appointments.

READ MORE: [How to cut your hair at home without ruining it](#)

Manitoba also states that services will be limited to hair washes, cuts, colouring and styling, and no other personal services are allowed. Some stylists in the province are also making services optional, like blow-drying hair after a cut, to reduce the amount of time spent on each appointment.

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“Everybody in our industry wants to make sure that both their staff and

clients are safe,” Audet said. “There’s not a push to reopen the quickest possible.”

While there’s risk in any activity, including grocery shopping, it’s the service providers who are at greater risk of exposure to the virus, Furness said.

“The person doing the haircut is exposed to a whole stream of people for their entire shift,” he explained.

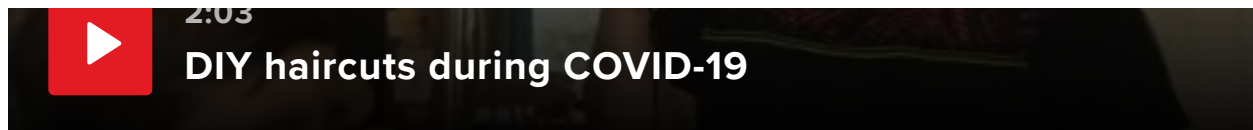
Protective equipment and cleaning

Furness said “the smartest thing to do” would be for stylists to wear an N95 mask and customers to wear a surgical paper mask. N95s are used to protect against COVID-19 as they screen out 95 per cent of small particles.

“The customer will be keeping their droplets to themselves by wearing a paper mask, and the service provider will be wearing an N95 to prevent inhalation of anything,” he said.

“And then, of course, you need to worry about where hands are touching and where hands are going, and disinfect those kinds of surfaces, armrests or what have you.”





— DIY haircuts during COVID-19

Saskatchewan announced in late April that [salons](#) and [barbershops](#) could reopen on May 19, and has published [general guidelines](#) for personal care services during the pandemic. Among those are securing [personal protective equipment](#) (PPE) and adjusting physical spaces to allow for physical distancing between clients where possible.

There are concerns, however, about access to PPE. Some [salon owners in Saskatchewan](#) say they're not yet comfortable with reopening and are still trying to obtain proper equipment.

Clara Edvi, who owns The Make-up Lounge and Style Bar in Regina, told Global News she isn't ready to reopen, and wants all salons to have proper training on COVID-19 safety measures before taking clients.

"The last thing we want to see is salons opening too quickly, not enough time between (reopening) phases, and then having an outbreak caused by a salon because we didn't have that proper training," she said.

Inspections

It's important to have public health guidelines for salons and barbershops, but it's also a good idea to have safety inspectors do routine visits to observe how COVID-19 prevention measures are being implemented, Furness said.

READ MORE: [How to dye your hair at home](#)

"It's not just about publishing a 'how-to' sheet in terms of 'these are the things you need to hit,' because every space is going to be unique, and every space is going to have risks," he said.

“Public health inspectors have been going to grocery stores looking at practices and suggesting changes. I think that’s excellent and should happen for salons, too.”

Salons are already inspected by officials the same way restaurants are, Furness said, but adding additional support from public health can both help ensure salons are adhering to the best hygienic practices and answer any questions workers may have.

He acknowledges that this would require a lot of resources — especially in big cities like Toronto.



— Keeping your hair healthy during quarantine

Coleman said stylists should receive COVID-19 training that will help them feel more secure in providing services.

“A training program pretty much on par with someone who’s working in the health-care system coming into contact with many people on a daily basis would be definitely beneficial,” he said.

Questions about COVID-19? Here are some things you need to know:

Health officials caution against all international travel. Returning travellers are legally obligated to self-isolate for 14 days, beginning March 26, in case they develop symptoms and to prevent spreading the virus to others. Some provinces and territories have also implemented additional recommendations or enforcement measures to ensure those returning to the area self-isolate.

[Symptoms](#) can include fever, cough and difficulty breathing — very similar to a cold or flu. Some people can develop a more severe illness. People most at risk of this include older adults and people with severe chronic medical conditions like heart, lung or kidney disease. If you develop symptoms, [contact public health authorities](#).

To [prevent the virus from spreading](#), experts recommend frequent handwashing and coughing into your sleeve. They also recommend minimizing contact with others, staying home as much as possible and maintaining a distance of two metres from other people if you go out.

For full COVID-19 coverage from Global News, [click here](#).

— *With files from Global News' Amy Judd and Daniella Ponticelli*

Canadian cases

CONFIRMED

71,146

(Today: +1,176)

DEATHS

5,169

(Today: +176)

RECOVERED

34,055

(Today: +1,048)

1,199,208 tests administered (Today: +23,361)

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Last Updated: EDT

Sources: [How we got the data](#)

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