

Management of COVID-19 in the Dental Practice

Every few years, we inevitably encounter a new virus on a global scale. In 2002 we had Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) and in 2012 Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS).

With the development of the 2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19), we must join other health care practitioners to help slow the spread of this virus.

The health and safety of our patients have been the top priority in dentistry for decades. For all practices, the backbone of infection control has been the CDC's Standard Precautions, OSHA guidelines, the use of personal protective equipment, up-to-date sterilization practice, and a well-informed staff. You can find resources from the Organization for Safety, Asepsis, and Prevention (OSAP) online.

While your patients are likely already familiar with your commitment to this standard of care, it is especially important to reinforce this message with your patients who have concerns and apprehension at times like this.

It is strongly recommended that dental practitioners stay current on the latest information available by regularly visiting the CDC website, as updated data is shared. We must also follow the CDC's Health Alert Network (HAN) to monitor new recommendations. This is the primary method of sharing cleared information about urgent public health situations.

As of March 16, 2020, the ADA is recommending that dentists nationwide postpone elective procedures to mitigate the spread of COVID-19.

"The American Dental Association recognizes the unprecedented and extraordinary circumstances dentists, and all health care professionals face related to growing concern about COVID-19," said ADA President Chad P. Gehani in a March 16th statement. "The ADA is deeply concerned for the health and well-being of the public and the dental team. For dentistry to do its part to mitigate the spread of COVID-19, the ADA recommends dentists nationwide postpone elective procedures for the next three weeks. Concentrating on emergency dental care will allow us to care for our emergency patients and alleviate the burden that dental emergencies would place on hospital emergency departments."

By staying proactive, informed, and calm, dentists nationwide can help our communities manage this health crisis properly and protect the health and safe of patients and staff.

<https://www.dentistrytoday.com/news/todays-dental-news/item/6014-dentists-already-are-prepared-for-the-coronavirus>

<https://emergency.cdc.gov/HAN/>

<https://www.ada.org/en/publications/ada-news/2020-archive/march/ada-recommending-dentists-postpone-elective-procedures>

<https://www.cdc.gov/oralhealth/infectioncontrol/index.html>

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