

Protocols for Dental Practice Management and the nCoV Infection

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[The CDC notes](#) that the dental community has been doing an excellent job of protecting our patients via state-of-the-art infection control practices. Thorough infection control measures and the practice of universal precautions should include the use of personal protective equipment (PPE), including masks, gloves, protective eyewear, and gowns. Implementing these practices has led to better protection for our staff and patients. Our use of disinfectants, current sterilization practices with standard monitoring, dedicated handwashing, and one-time-use disposable materials have helped facilitate safe dental visits for our patients. These practices have been the backbone of the CDC's [Standard Precautions](#).

Your office policy and protocol mandates that you discuss the current outbreak with your staff and develop a consistent message that patient wellbeing is the practice's number one consideration and that the use of standard precautions keeps everyone safe. You can review the ADA's research in conjunction with CDC recommendations for more information.

Second, thoroughly review the CDC's [Standard Precautions guidelines](#) with your staff to insure receipt and understanding of the most current information.

Finally, let your patients know that you are practicing these precautions as a routine part of your practice and that they are in compliance with CDC guidelines. It may be prudent to call patients before their appointment to ascertain any symptoms that would determine if their appointment should be delayed, if they should self-quarantine, or be seen at a health facility.

While we know that our oral health practices are safe for our patients and staff, the ongoing news about the virus can make people nervous and withdrawn. COVID-19 has been proven to be highly contagious, and carries a fatality rate 3-4 times higher than the seasonal flu. We must be proactive in offering calming reassurance to our staff and patients that our infection control measures and standard precautions are in place to deter any spread of the virus. We also must remember that many people, including our patients and some of our staff, may lack basic understanding of the information provided or receive conflicting information. As health care practitioners, we must do our share to help contain the spread of this virus and protect our fellow citizens.

For more information, visit the reference links below, or call our Risk Management Support Line with related questions.

<https://www.ada.org/en/publications/ada-news/2020-archive/february/ada-releases-coronavirus-handout-for-dentists-based-on-cdc-guidelines>

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

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

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