

DENTAL PATIENT CARE IN THE ERA OF COVID-19

Covid-19 is changing how dentists are treating patients. Read this to learn what steps are being taken to help make you safe at the dentist office. After reading this, contact your dental office if you have any questions.

SAFE DENTAL CARE

Dental offices have a long history of providing safe dental care. They follow rules set by health experts. This is what they will do to keep you safe:

- ✓ They clean all surfaces and equipment after each patient.
- ✓ They replace plastic used to protect surfaces.
- ✓ They sterilize any dental tools used in a patient's mouth.
- ✓ They wear face masks, eye covers and special clothing.

NEW WAYS TO TREAT PATIENTS

Dental offices have new procedures to prevent spreading COVID-19. The way they now treat patients is based on guidance from health experts.

COVID-19 is new and scientists are learning more about it every day. Based on what they learn, dentists may change the way they treat patients over time.

These are some of the new things you can expect at your dentist's office.

BEFORE YOU GO TO THE DENTIST'S OFFICE

- ✓ Your dental office may call you 1-2 days before your visit. They may ask you if you are sick. They may ask if anyone in your household is sick. They may also ask if you or anyone in your household has been diagnosed with COVID-19.
- ✓ If you or anyone in your household is sick, your dental office will set up a visit for a different time.
- ✓ Patients getting certain treatments may be asked to obtain a COVID-19 test before the visit.
- ✓ You may be asked to not bring anyone with you to your appointment unless they are needed for services like helping to understand a different language, or are the parent or guardian of a child being treated.

SIGNS OF COVID-19

| | |
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| Fever or chills (fever = 100.4°F or greater) | Cough |
| Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing | Fatigue |
| Muscle or body aches | Headache |
| New loss of taste or smell | Sore throat |
| Congestion or runny nose | Nausea or vomiting |
| Diarrhea | |

AT THE DENTAL OFFICE

- ✓ Your dentist may ask you to call or text before you enter the office. To reduce the time you spend in the office, you may be asked to stay outside until the dentist is ready to see you. You will get a call or text you when they are ready to see you.
- ✓ You may be required to wear a face covering before entering the building.
- ✓ The office may also ask that you come alone to your visit to limit the number of people on site.
- ✓ Once inside, you may again be asked the same questions that you were asked on the phone. They may take your temperature. If you do not have any signs of being sick, you will either be asked to sit in the waiting area or go directly to the treatment room.
- ✓ You may be asked to wash your hands or use hand sanitizer when you enter the office.
- ✓ The waiting room may not be used or may be set up in a different way. Some offices have a barrier between the desk person and patients. The desk person will wear a mask. Pens and other things used to check in patients and receive payment will be cleaned.



IN THE TREATMENT ROOM

- ✓ The dentist and the dental staff may wear special clothing. They may wear a special type of mask. They may wear a full-face shield. They may have coverings on their hair and feet. What they wear will depend on the level of risk in your area. It also depends on the type of treatment you receive.
- ✓ There may be equipment in the room to circulate the air. Air filters may be used. Some dental offices may open windows during treatment. The dental chair may be in a different position for better airflow.
- ✓ If your dental office does not have individual rooms for treatment, there may be barriers such as curtains to separate the dental chairs.



THE WAY TREATMENTS ARE DONE MAY BE DIFFERENT

Health experts have told dentists to take care in the use of dental drills. Your dentist may do some things differently to reduce the spread of the spray from the dental drill.

AFTER YOUR VISIT

Several days after your visit, your dental office may call you. You may be asked if you are sick. You may be asked to contact the dental office over the next two weeks if you get sick or are diagnosed with COVID-19.

Some parts of dental care have changed because of COVID-19. Your dentist is taking steps to make sure your dental care is safe. Your dental care should protect you and your dentist from getting sick.

