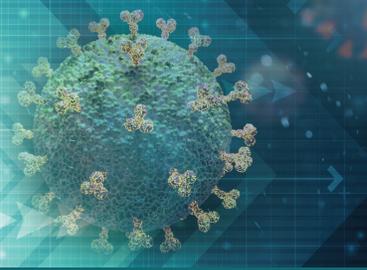




Preparing your periodontal practice for Coronavirus (COVID-19)



On March 16, 2020, the American Dental Association (ADA) issued a recommendation that all dentists nationwide postpone elective procedures for three weeks to alleviate the burden that dental emergencies would place on hospital emergency departments. The American Dental Association also issued guidance on what constitutes emergency versus non-emergency procedures in a dental office. Please visit ada.org for up-to-date resources. This information is intended to help practitioners determine how and when to most safely treat patients during the COVID-19 pandemic. The AAP advises that its members follow these recommendations while also looking to state dental boards, associations, and licensing agencies for more specific, localized information.

It should be noted that these are currently recommendations, not mandates. Until otherwise directed by national or state regulatory bodies, periodontists should rely on their clinical acumen and specialized training to determine when a patient needs emergency treatment.

The following information is compiled from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC). Please visit cdc.gov/COVID19 for the most up-to-date information on the virus and recommended precautions.

How to handle patients in the periodontal office

Prepare



- Identify which patients are at higher risk of adverse outcomes from COVID-19. These higher risk populations include those:
 - Who are 65 years of age or older
 - With a history of pulmonary disease, chronic kidney disease, liver disease, cardiovascular disease, HIV, diabetes mellitus
 - With a history of transplants
 - Who are on immunosuppressive medicationsSee cdc.gov for more information.
- Have appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE).
- Stay connected with your state health department regarding specific guidelines pertaining to the status of COVID-19 in your area.

Communicate



- Question all patients about symptoms related to COVID-19 (fever, cough, breathing difficulty) when determining who needs to be seen. Ask about recent travel and community exposure. See AAP's Guidelines for COVID Screening for more information.
- Reschedule non-urgent appointments and postpone elective procedures.
- Provide updates about changes to your policies regarding appointments.
- Check outgoing office messages as well as auto appointment scheduling tools to be sure they are sensitive to this health crisis and align with current COVID-19 procedures.
- Use your practice website and social media channels to share updates.
- Post signs at entrances and in waiting areas about preventive actions and office safety protocols.

Protect



- Ensure patient supplies are readily available: tissues, alcohol-based hand rub, appropriate facemasks, soap/towels, trash cans.
- Place chairs 6 feet apart. Use barriers if possible. Remove toys, reading materials, or other communal objects from waiting room.
- Allow patients to wait in cars. Have staff at entrance screen patients about symptoms: fever, cough, breathing difficulty. Take patients' temperatures upon arrival. Limit non-patient visitors.
- Provide symptomatic patients with facemasks.
- Emphasize proper hand hygiene and cough etiquette for everyone.
- Separate symptomatic patients from healthy. Place sick patients in private rooms as quickly as possible.
- After patients leave, clean surfaces with EPA-registered disinfectant.
- Provide at-home care instructions to patients with respiratory symptoms. Follow up by phone.
- Notify health department of any patients with COVID-19.

Find signs for your clinic and infection prevention guidelines: www.cdc.gov/COVID19. Monitor your state's regulations regarding management of emergency patients and treatment protocols. Be prepared and be safe!