

Safety Measures in Our Dental Practice

1. Training and Educating Our Team

- Had refresher training in proper hand washing techniques. Although basic, it is the most important thing we can do to prevent the spread of the virus. [Hand Hygiene](#)
- Practiced the appropriate use of personal protective equipment (PPE) prior to caring for a patient to prevent contamination.
- Educated on mask types [Understanding Mask Types](#)
- Reviewed education on how infectious respiratory viruses are spread how to protect yourself and others [CDC COVID-19 Factsheet](#)
- Encouraged staff that is not feeling well to proactively stay home for 14 days.
- Have everyone in the office take their temperature at the beginning and afternoon of every day and will immediately send home anyone with an elevated temperature (100.2 and above)
- Limit the numbers of staff providing care to facilitate social distancing within the office and among team members.
- Created a specific checklist of recommendations for our team to follow so they arrive to work healthy and go home to their families without worry

2. Recommendations to Our Team

Before coming to work

- Take temperature (do not go into work if you or any other family member are experiencing symptoms; cough sore throat, fever, etc.)
- Removed watch and rings and leave at home
- Tie hair up, leave nails short
- Avoid extra accessories
- Place phone in Ziplock bag that you will discard at the end of each day
- If bringing a lunch, place in disposable wrapping
- Activate ApplePay or similar electronic service so there is no need for cash or credit card
- Bring work clothes in a washable or disposable bag
- Practiced the appropriate use of PPE prior to caring for a patient to prevent contamination

At Work

- Change into scrubs and work shoes (preferably plastic and wipeable) as soon as you arrive
- Take temperature and complete Daily Screening Log
- Use PPE as appropriate
- Leave all clutter (pens, phones, etc.) outside of patient op rooms

- Discourage staff from using other workers phones, desks, offices and other work tools and equipment when possible
- Clean phone handset after use
- Discourage cell phone use at work

After Work

- Wash hands and arms with soap
- Remove scrubs and place in washable bag or leave at work
- Wash hands and put on clean clothes
- Sanitize phone, glasses, etc.
- Wash hands again

At Home

- Do not touch anything
- Remove shoes and clothes
- Wash clothes/scrubs in washing machine with detergent and hot water
- Shower immediately with soap and water before touching anything (including family)

3. Patient Interviews and Social Distancing

Before patient arrival every effort is made to

- Filter patients during the phone call when scheduling appointments for care using established and recommended screening checklists and scripts
- Prepare scripts and questions to recognize potential carriers
- Reschedule patients who show any signs of a cough or fever or who describe having any concerning warning signs
- Instruct patients to call ahead and reschedule their appointment if they develop any symptoms of a respiratory infection (cough, sore throat or fever) on the day they are scheduled to be seen

To promote social distancing

- Prioritize high risk patients (immune compromised, over 60 years old, etc) with appointments times that promote less contact with other people
- When booking patients, spreading out the schedule so there are less people in the reception room (a maximum of 2 people)
- If a patient is being accompanied, their escort should wait in the car to limit the number of people in the waiting room and promote social distancing
- Utilizing a “virtual” waiting room: patients can opt to wait in their car or outside the office where they can be contacted by mobile phone when it is their turn to be treated

Safety measures taken upon arrival

- Limit points of entry to the clinic
- Post visual alerts (signs, posters) at the entrance door advising patients of the COVID-19 risk and advising them not to enter the facility when ill
- Masks and tissues are made accessible immediately upon entry and instructions are provided on how to dispose contaminated items in waste receptacles
- Patients will be given gloves to wear for the duration of their visit
- Provide supplies such as alcohol-based hand rub with 60-95% alcohol, tissues and no-touch receptacles for disposal, at the entrance, in reception room and at front desk
- Post photos at the entrance and in waiting room to provide patients and Health Care Personnel with instructions about hand hygiene, respiratory language and cough etiquette

4. Measures Upon Arrival

Patients are

- When called to come into the office the patient will be asked about the presence of symptoms of respiratory infection and history of travel or contact with possible COVID-19 patients and complete Patient Screening Form
- Immediately escorted to hand sanitizing station and provided a mask and gloves
- Assessed for respiratory symptoms and fever (with a non-contact digital infrared forehead thermometer)
- If fever temperature of 100.2 degrees F or higher or respiratory symptoms are present, they will be advised to seek medical treatment and their visit will be rescheduled
- Escorted into an examination room as quickly as possible upon arrival to avoid lingering in the front office
- As testing for the virus becomes more available, we may be incorporating this added benefit to screen patients

5. Measures Taken Upon Patient Entry to the Clinic

- If an examination room is not readily available, ensure social distancing in the waiting room by placing seating a minimum 6 feet apart
- Remove all clutter and anything that is not easily disinfected from the reception room (magazines, area rugs, pens, etc.)
- Cover all furniture which cannot be disinfected with disposable covers which will be replaced after each patient
- Frequent wipe down of reception room, bathrooms, door handles, tables, light switches, computers, etc.

6. Reception Room and Front Desk Safety Measures

- Install physical barriers or partitions (plexiglass) at the reception areas to limit close contact between front office staff and potentially infectious patients
- Headphone use is encouraged, so hands are free and only one person uses it
- Place air filtration system with HEPA filters

7. Protocol of the Clinical Team

We adhere to usual standard and transmission-based precautions in operatory but with greater attention to detail and ensure that procedures are followed consistently and correctly.

Hand Hygiene is performed by staff

- Before and after all patient contact, contact with potentially infectious material, and before putting on and after removing PPE, including gloves
- After removing PPE in order to remove and pathogens that might have been transferred to bare hands during the removal process
- Washing hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds

Personal Protective Equipment

- Wear PPE (masks, respirators, gloves, cap, eye protection, face shields, gowns)
- Front office personnel will wear gloves when handling documents that will be passed from person to patient
- ASTM Level III Facemasks are one time use and replaced if soiled
- N95 or equivalent respirators should be used instead of a surgical mask when performing or present for an aerosol-generating procedure (use of additional ASTM Level III mask worn over N95 will prevent soilage and prolong life of N95 mask)

Eye Protection

- Put on eye protection (glasses, loupes, face shields that covers the front and sides of face) upon entry to the patient room
- Remove eye protection before leaving patient room
- Reusable eye protection must be cleaned and disinfected according to manufacturer's reprocessing instructions prior to re-use
- Disposable eye protection should be discarded after use

Gloves

- Put on clean gloves upon entry into the patient room or care area

- Change gloves if they become torn or heavily contaminated
- Remove and discard gloves when leaving the patient room and immediately perform hand hygiene

Gowns

- Put on isolation gown upon entry into the patient room or area
- Change the gown if it becomes soiled. Remove and discard the gown in a dedicated container for waste or linen before leaving the patient room or care area. Disposable gowns should be discarded and cloth gowns should be laundered after each use
- Gowns should be prioritized for all aerosol-generating procedures and during activities where splashed and sprays are anticipated

Shoe Covers

- These will be worn if shoes cannot be appropriately wiped down and disinfected

8. Patients in the Operatory

- Health care personnel (HCP) should strictly follow basic infection control practices between patients (hand hygiene, cleaning and disinfecting shared equipment)
- Limit transport and movement of the patient outside of the room
- No other team member should enter the room during a procedure and if necessary, should use PPE as described above
- Entry and exit of operatory should be minimized
- Once the patient has left the operatory, HCP refrain from entering the op until sufficient time has elapsed to remove potentially infectious particles
- After this time has elapsed, the room should undergo appropriate cleaning and surface disinfection before it is returned to routine use
- Special precautions will be taken when performing aerosol-generating procedures (aerosol reducing equipment)

9. Protocols After the Clinical Treatment

- All non-disposable medical equipment used for patient care should be cleaned and disinfected according to manufacturer's instructions
- Ensure that environmental cleaning and disinfection procedures are followed consistently and correctly
- Routine cleaning and disinfection procedures (using cleaner and water to pre-clean surfaces prior to applying an EPA-registered, hospital-grade disinfectant to frequently touched surfaces or objects for appropriate contact times as indicated on the product's label) are appropriate for SARS-CoV-2 in healthcare settings, including those patient-care areas in which aerosol-generating procedures are performed

Safety measures after the visit

- Encourage payment by credit card over the phone to encourage social distancing with front office
- Review of estimates and insurance forms can be carried out via phone call or video conferencing and send via email
- Patients wash hands before leaving

At the end of the day

- Clean and disinfect the office from top to bottom in preparation for the following day
- Start UV germicidal disinfection in each operatory room

We are confident that these guidelines will help to create a safe environment for all of our patients and team members and hop that you can feel secure in the knowledge that we are doing everything in our power to provide the safest clinical conditions in order to protect our patients, team and families.