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CDC Guidance for Dental Settings Echoes ADA Guidance

*Organizations Recommend How to Move Forward With
Dental Care During Pandemic*

May 29, 2020

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CHICAGO, May 29, 2020 — The American Dental Association (ADA) welcomes the release of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)'s recently updated [Guidance for Dental Settings](#), noting it is very similar to science-based [guidance](#) issued a month ago by the ADA. Both guidances describe how dental professionals, building upon existing infection control measures, can help protect patients and the dental team when re-engaging in providing the full range of oral health care.

“Oral health is an important part of overall health,” according to ADA President Chad Gehani, D.D.S. “Resuming regular dental visits are important because treatment, as well as prevention of dental disease, helps keep people healthy. The guidances from the ADA and the CDC give dental professionals the information they need to practice as safely as possible.”

The CDC guidance provides detailed patient management and facility consideration information for before, during and after dental appointments, which is in close alignment with the ADA's Return to Work Interim Guidance Toolkit. CDC and ADA recommendations include:

- Request that dental staff call patients prior to the scheduled appointment to ask questions about their current health status.
- Advise patients to wear a face covering when entering the dental practice.
- Limit the number of people who accompany a patient to the appointment. If possible, the patient should make the visit alone.
- Assess all patients upon arrival; temperature checks may be completed.
- Remove items in office waiting rooms such as toys or reading material to limit potential transmission through high touch surfaces.
- Encourage social distancing practices by minimizing the number of patients in the waiting room by spacing appointments thoughtfully and perhaps by asking patients to wait in their car until the dental staff is ready to treat the patient.
- Advise dental staff members to wear additional personal protective equipment (PPE) as appropriate, such as surgical masks or N95 masks, full face shields or goggles with side shields to ensure an environment that is as safe and healthy as possible for patients and the dental team.
- Place hand sanitizer generously around the office for use, and ensure surfaces are cleaned regularly.

The CDC's updated dental settings guidance offers additional recommendations such as how patients can be positioned in the dental chair during appointments.

The ADA guidance also includes ways dentists and hygienists can reduce aerosols such as:

- hand scaling when cleaning teeth rather than using ultrasonic scaling,
- use of high velocity suction whenever possible and
- use of rubber dental dams whenever possible

It is important to note that both the CDC and ADA guidances are science-based recommendations and not regulations. States control what procedures are allowed to be provided, largely through their licensing boards. For example, in Ohio, the state dental board has chosen to refer dentists to the CDC and ADA for

Personal Protection Equipment and infection control recommendations, but not what procedures can be provided in Ohio's dental practices.

According to the CDC's guidance, "Dental health care professionals should regularly consult their state dental boards and state or local health departments for current local information for requirements specific to their jurisdictions."

"I am pleased to see dental practices reopening to provide patients with the dental care they need," Dr. Gehani said. "The longer patients go without preventive care and treatment for early forms of dental disease, the more likely their untreated disease will progress. The safety of patients, dentists and dental team members has been and always will be ADA's utmost concern."

Editor's Note: This statement has been updated to reflect updates to the CDC's Guidance for Dental Settings posted June 17. Reporters are invited to follow the ADA on Twitter [@AmerDentalAssn](#)

About the ADA

The not-for-profit ADA is the nation's largest dental association, representing 163,000 dentist members. The premier source of oral health information, the ADA has advocated for the public's health and promoted the art and science of dentistry since 1859. The ADA's state-of-the-art research facilities develop and test dental products and materials that have advanced the practice of dentistry and made the patient experience more positive. The ADA Seal of Acceptance long has been a valuable and respected guide to consumer dental care products. The monthly The Journal of the American Dental Association (JADA) is the ADA's flagship publication and the best-read scientific journal in dentistry. For more information about the ADA, visit [ADA.org](#). For more information on oral health, including prevention, care and treatment of dental disease, visit the ADA's consumer website [MouthHealthy.org](#)

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