



Safety Measures in our Dental Practice

1. Training and Educating Our Team

One of the most important things we are doing during this time is training and educating our team.

- Our team has had refresher training in proper hand washing techniques. This may seem basic; however, it is the most important thing we can do to prevent spread of the virus, yet research shows that it is often poorly complied with and usually not done well. Consequently, we have spent time ensuring that our team does it well and often, especially before and after every patient encounter.
- They have practiced the appropriate use of personal protective equipment (PPE) prior to caring for a patient to prevent contamination.
- We encourage team members that are not feeling well to proactively stay home for two weeks.
- We have everyone in the office complete a daily health screening and take their temperature at the beginning of every day. This information is logged, and we will immediately send home anyone with an elevated temperature (100.4 F or greater).
- We ask employees to report if they or their family members have a confirmed positive or known exposure.
- We will limit the numbers of team members providing in-office care to facilitate social distancing within the office and among team members.
- We have created a specific checklist of recommendation for our team to follow so that they arrive to work healthy and go home to their families without worry. (see Checklist of Recommendations for Our Team)

2. Recommendations for Our Team

Before coming to work

- Take temperature (do not go in to work if you or any other family member are experiencing symptoms; cough, sore throat, fever...etc.).
- Remove watch and rings and leave at home.
- Tie hair up, keep nails short.
- Avoid extra accessories.
- Place phone in a Ziplock bag that you will discard at the end of the day.
- If bringing lunch, place in disposable wrapping.
- Activate ApplePay so there is no need for cash or credit card.



At work

- Complete daily health screening and temperature check and log prior to entering the office.
- Store all personal items in locker and wash hands after doing so.
- Team members will wear a mask while in the office.
- Change into scrubs (if street clothes worn to the office) and work shoes (as provided by the office) as soon as you arrive.
- Use PPE as appropriate.
- We discourage workers 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 to take home or leave for laundering; shoes will be left onsite and disinfected.
- Wash hands and put clean clothes on.
- Sanitize phone, glasses, etc.
- Wash hands again.

At home

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

3. Patient Interviews and Social Distancing

Before patient arrival every effort is made to

- Conduct a pre-appointment screening for all patients with a phone call the day prior to their appointment using established and recommended screening checklists . (this screening will be repeated upon arrival to office)
- 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 symptoms of a respiratory infection (e.g., cough, sore throat or fever) on the day they are scheduled to be seen – all reservation fees will be waived at this time.
- Remind patients/guardians to limit extra companions on their trip to the office to only essential people to reduce the number of people in the office.
- Ask patients to text office upon arrival and to wait in vehicle until escorted into the office by a member of our team.
- Ask patients to wear a mask to all appointments – if a patient does not have a mask, one will be provided upon arrival.
- Ask patients to minimize any personal items brought into the office.

To promote social distancing

- Prioritize high risk patients (immune compromised, over 60 y.o. etc.) with early morning appointments so less contact with other people
- When reserving appointments, we are designing our schedule so there are less people in the office at any given time. This may mean that our team may contact you to adjust your appointment time or to reschedule to a later date.
- If a patient is being accompanied to their appointment, their escort should wait in the car.
- Utilize a “virtual” waiting room: patients will wait in their car or outside the office where they will be greeted by a team member at the time of their appointment.

Safety measures taken upon arrival

- Limit points of entry to the office.
- Post visual alerts (e.g., signs, posters) at the entrance door advising patients of the COVID-19 risk and advising them not to enter the facility when ill.
- Post visual alerts at the entrance and in waiting room to provide patients and HCP (Health Care Personnel) with instructions about hand hygiene, respiratory hygiene, and cough etiquette.
 - How and when to perform hand hygiene.
 - How to use tissues or elbows to cover nose and mouth when coughing or sneezing.
 - How to dispose of tissues and contaminated items in waste receptacle.
- Tissues are made accessible immediately upon entry and instructions are provided on how to use tissues to cover nose and mouth when coughing or sneezing, to dispose of tissues and contaminated items in no-touch waste receptacles in the restrooms, living room and front desk.

ALL these measures can help to prevent transmission to others.



4. Measures Upon Arrival

Patients are

- Re-screened for signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and have their temperature taken (with a non-contact digital infrared forehead thermometer) and will be asked to sign a health disclosure form and acknowledgement prior to entering the office.
- If temperature of 100.4 degrees F or greater or respiratory symptoms are present, they will be advised to seek medical treatment and their visit will be rescheduled.
- Provided a mask if patient does not have their own.
- As testing for the virus becomes more available, we will consider incorporating this added benefit to screen patients.

5. Measures Taken Upon Patient Entry to the Clinic

- Immediately escorted to rest room for hand washing.
- Asked to rinse with 1.5% hydrogen peroxide before each appointment.
- Escorted to an examination room.

6. Reception Room and Front Desk Safety Measures

- Hands free hand sanitizing units have been installed throughout the office.
- Headphone use is encouraged, so hands are free and only one person uses it.
- Many of our administrative team members are working from home and are happy to help with virtual consultations .
- Chairs have been placed 6 feet apart to encourage social distancing if a patient must use the living room.
- All magazines, toys and anything not easily disinfected have been removed from the living room.
- All common areas (counters, doorknobs, light switches, etc.) are disinfected every hour.
- Hand dryers in restrooms will not be used. Disposable towels have been made available.
- Eliminate paper through use of digital technology as much as possible.



7. Protocols of the Clinical Team

Safety and infection control have always been top priorities in our practice, and we adhere to standards set forth by the ADA, CDC, and OSHA. We continue to take these precautions but with greater attention to detail. We have had and will continue to have a team member dedicated to sterilization and infection control. This team member is responsible for cleaning, sterilizing, disinfecting, and wiping down everything in the operatories and in the living room, chairs, handles, light switches, tables, etc. on a regular basis.

Hand Hygiene is performed by our staff

- Before and after all patient contact, contact with potentially infectious material, and before putting on and after removing personal protective equipment (PPE), including gloves.
- After removing PPE in order to remove any 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, gloves, bonnets, eye protection, face shields and gowns).
- N95 masks or equivalent should be used when performing or present for an aerosol-generating procedure.

Eye Protection

- Put on eye protection (i.e., goggles or a disposable face shield that covers the front and sides of the face) upon entry to the patient room or care area.
- Remove eye protection before leaving the patient room or care area.
- Reusable eye protection (e.g., goggles) 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, non-sterile 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 or care area, and immediately perform hand hygiene.



Gowns

- Put on a clean 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 splashes and sprays are anticipated.
- Gowns are optional when performing exams/post-op appointments where no treatment is performed.
- Hygienists should wear clinical jacket during appointment if no aerosol is generated. If aerosol is anticipated, a gown should be worn.

Shoes

- The office provides medical crocs for each team member that are worn only at the office and left at the office at the end of each shift.

8. Patients in the Operatory

- Health care personnel (HCP) should strictly follow basic infection control practices between patients (e.g., hand hygiene, cleaning and disinfecting shared equipment).
- Limit transport and movement of the patient outside of the room.
- Consider placing x-ray equipment in patient operatories to reduce the need for patient transport.
- No other team member should enter the room during a procedure and if necessary, should use PPE as described above.
- 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 (AGP), specifically, procedures that are likely to induce coughing are avoided if possible.
- Patients undergoing aerosol-generating procedures are in a separate operatories.
- Eliminate non-essential equipment from operatory and countertops.
- Cover computer keyboards with disposable wrap to reduce contamination.



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 (e.g., using cleaners 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.
- We are implementing self-contained germicidal cleaning devices that use proven ultraviolet emitting radiation technology to help reduce and eliminate bacteria, viruses and other pathogens on environmental surfaces and are approved by the FDA.

Safety Measures After the Visit

- Encourage payment via Apple Pay or with credit card over the phone to encourage social distancing with front desk.
- Review of estimates and insurance forms can be carried out via phone call or video conferencing and sent via mail – we will offer virtual consultations.
- Patients wash hands before leaving.

At the End of the Day

- A special cleaning crew has been hired to clean and disinfect the office from top to bottom in preparation for the following day.

We are confident that these guidelines will help to create a safe environment for all of our patients and team members and hope 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, our team and our families.