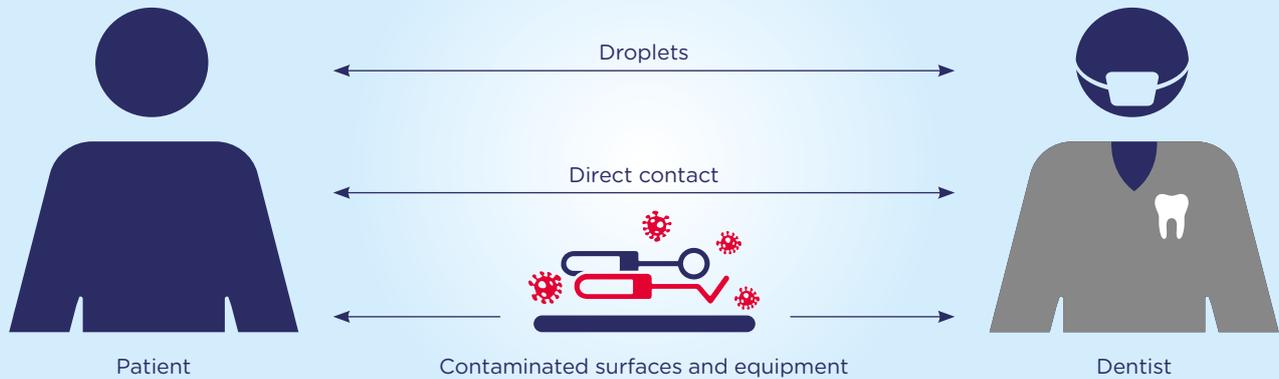


# How dental professionals can play their part in protecting against COVID-19

Dental professionals need to take extra care to protect themselves, their staff and patients from COVID-19. This sheet contains a brief summary from international sources. Please refer to your own professional or national guidance for more information.

## The risks in dentistry<sup>1</sup>



## 1. BEFORE PATIENTS ARRIVE AT THE CLINIC



The following patients should be asked not to come to the practice. Postpone their appointment:<sup>2-4</sup>

- Those with running nose, dry cough, fever, body ache
- Just returned from high risk countries
- Close physical contact with someone in either of the above categories
- Communicate via text message, answer phone or a poster displayed before the practice entrance

## 2. WHILE PATIENTS ARE WAITING FOR THEIR APPOINTMENT<sup>5</sup>



- Schedule appointments to minimise possible contact with other patients in the waiting room
- Ask patients to arrive on time for their appointment, not early, to minimise the time they spend in your waiting room
- Remove toys and magazines from your waiting room
- Provide tissues and non-touch receptacles for tissue disposal<sup>6</sup>
- Offer a disposable surgical mask to anyone who is coughing<sup>6</sup>

## 3. IN THE DENTIST'S CHAIR<sup>1</sup>



- If using a preprocedural mouth rinse use 1% hydrogen peroxide or 0.2% povidone (chlorhexidine may not be effective in killing coronavirus)
- Rubber dams can significantly minimise aerosol splatter - consider when using high-speed handpieces and dental ultrasonic devices
- If not possible consider manual devices for caries removal and periodontal scaling
- Do not use dental handpieces without anti-retraction function
- Non-urgent and elective procedures, particularly splatter causing procedures e.g. scaling and tooth preparations should be avoided if cases of COVID-19 have been confirmed in the area or if the patient is displaying flu-like symptoms<sup>2,6</sup>

## 4. EMERGENCY TREATMENT OF PATIENTS KNOWN TO BE INFECTED WITH CORONAVIRUS



- Dental settings are not usually designed to carry out all the transmission-based precautions required - the treatment may need to be done in a hospital<sup>5</sup>
- Medical waste generated by the treatment of a patient with suspected or confirmed coronavirus is regarded as infected medical waste<sup>1</sup> and should be dealt with according to local protocols

## PROTECTING YOUR TEAM<sup>2,4</sup>

The following staff should not come to work:<sup>2-4</sup>

- Those with running nose, dry cough, fever, body ache
- Just returned from high risk countries
- Close physical contact with someone in either of the above categories
- Staff should be warned to avoid touching their own eyes, mouth and nose<sup>1</sup>
- Staff should be advised to change the clothes they wore to work, and take a bath as soon as they get home, especially before having contact with children<sup>2</sup>
- Consider advising pregnant staff not to come into work<sup>2</sup>



## PERSONAL PROTECTION

- Universal infection control procedures should be adhered to<sup>2</sup>
- Barrier-protection equipment, including eyewear, masks, gloves, caps, face shields and protective outwear should be worn<sup>1</sup>
- Single-use masks should always be discarded after use, and never reused<sup>6</sup>
- If you are having difficulties obtaining masks or other personal protective equipment alert your local health department<sup>5</sup>
  - You may have to triage patients to ensure adequate personal protective equipment is available for the most urgent cases



## CLINIC CLEANING

- Routine cleaning and disinfection strategies used during influenza seasons can be applied to the environmental management for COVID-19<sup>6</sup>
- The disinfectant's accelerated hydrogen peroxide (0.5%), benzalkonium chloride (0.05%), ethyl alcohol (70%), isopropanol (50%), sodium hypochlorite (0.05-0.5%) are very effective against corona viruses<sup>2</sup>
- Clean and disinfect all public areas regularly, including door handles, chairs, bathrooms and elevators<sup>1,5</sup>



## HAND HYGIENE

- Everyone (patients and members of staff) should be asked to wash their hands with soap and water for 20 seconds when they arrive at the practice<sup>3</sup>
- If using hand sanitiser it should be chlorhexidine with alcohol or alcohol-based<sup>2</sup>
- Dental healthcare workers should wash their hands:<sup>1</sup>
  - Before examining a patient
  - Before any dental procedure
  - After touching a patient
  - After touching the surroundings and equipment without disinfection
  - After touching the oral mucosa, damaged skin or wound, blood, body fluid or secretions



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