

# ISDS Issues Recommendations for Dental Offices Regarding COVID-19

First, thank you for your patience as the ISDS Board of Trustees carefully assessed information from all parties weighing in on the COVID-19 situation before formulating our plan of action. Today was another busy news day, and we did not want to get ahead of the Governor's office in any of our recommendations.

Therefore, in light of national and state mandates and restrictions that are in effect to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 virus, the ISDS Board of Trustees has been closely monitoring and discussing the virus's transmission and precautions that dentists should temporarily implement in their dental offices. As leaders in the healthcare profession, we must be proactive to limit the spread of this virus. Dentists are in one of the highest risk categories for transmission and contraction of the virus, with many routine dental procedures potentially transmitting the virus via aerosolization of fluids.

The ISDS Board of Trustees is following the lead of Gov. Pritzker by keeping in unison with the restrictions he has imposed to protect the health and safety of the public, and to "flatten the curve for our health care workers and first responders." On Friday, he ordered the temporary closure of all K-12 schools effective March 16-30; earlier today, the closure of all restaurants to dine-in clients effective the evening of March 16 through March 30; and late tonight, the immediate closure of all state parks and wildlife To ensure the safety of our patients, communities and dental team members, ISDS recommends the following measures that align with Gov. Pritzker's mandates to limit the spread of COVID-19 through dental offices for the two-week period beginning Tuesday, March 17 through Tuesday, March 31:

- Treat only patients requiring emergency dental procedures.
- Postpone elective dental treatment and procedures.
- Preserve personal protective equipment (PPE) for emergency dental situations. This action will also preserve the limited supply of PPE so it can be used for urgent and more complex medical care that will be needed in our healthcare system.
- Communicate the utmost importance of the health and safety of our patients, the dental team and our community in implementing these measures

In the next two weeks, we anticipate that the Centers for Disease Control, American Dental Association and Illinois Department of Public Health may establish additional safety measures above and beyond our already comprehensive universal standards of infection control. We also recognize that dentists, as small business owners, have families and employees who rely on us. By taking these additional precautions, we hope to minimize the long-term impact on our offices by the spread of this virus. The

ADA is advocating for relief for dental offices at the federal level, and ISDS will, of course, continue advocating for our members in Springfield.

We also suggest some simple recommendations for you, your patients and your practices to prevent potential exposure:

- Pre-screen patients by phone prior to the visit by asking about recent travel history and current health. Specific COVID-19 symptoms are fever, coughing and shortness of breath. If the patient reports these symptoms, they should be referred to their primary care physician.
- When possible, ask patients to remain in their cars instead of coming into the waiting room. Notify them by cell phone when their treatment room is ready.
- Minimize the number of patients in the reception area and maintain space between patients per CDC guidelines.
- Take temperature of all patients immediately upon arrival.
- Have patients wash hands in the operatory and rinse with 1% hydrogen peroxide solution.
- Clean and disinfect public areas frequently, including door handles, chairs and bathrooms.

Remove all reading materials and children's toys/books from waiting rooms.

Thank you for your patience, understanding, and commitment to everyone's health and safety at a difficult time. As this is a rapidly developing situation, please be assured that your ISDS Officers and Board stand ready to make the best decisions for our communities, patients and dental teams. Stay apprised of the latest developments at [www.ISDS.org](http://www.ISDS.org) and facebook.

Current as of 3/15/2020