

Arizona State Board Dental Examiners' COVID-19 Statement:

As the facts and situation around COVID-19 (Coronavirus) continue to evolve, the Arizona State Board of Dental Examiners is requesting the cooperation of all Arizona dental licensees and is issuing the following guidance below. This recommendation is being made after careful deliberation and in consultation with state and national public health experts^[1], and in line with our mission to protect the public.

The Arizona State Board of Dental Examiners supports the [American Dental Association's \("ADA"\) recommendation\(s\)](#). To quote the ADA, "*As healthcare professionals, it is up to dentists to make well-informed decisions about their patients and practices.*" As always, the Board hopes and urges its licensees to continue to be available as needed for essential and/or emergency care and services, but to take appropriate and enhanced precautionary measures for patient safety, as well as the safety of their staffs and themselves.

The Board does not make this request lightly, but out of an abundance of caution during this historic public health emergency. As health care professionals, we all have a role to play in "flattening the curve" in order to follow sound, scientific public health advice to help limit infections and slow the spread of the virus.

Our collective actions now will determine the spread of COVID-19. We believe by taking these extraordinary precautions, dental practitioners can make a difference in helping to preserve the limited supply of personal protective equipment critical for emergency dental care and frontline health care personnel responding to the pandemic. We recognize the gravity of these extreme measures and are sensitive to the economic impact of such actions. Rest assured that the Board will advocate on behalf of all dental licensees in Arizona for economic relief packages.

We understand you will have questions about what to do next following this announcement. As licensed dental practitioners we urge you to do what is best for the communities you serve, including your staff and your patients. For the most up-to-date information and support, continue checking this webpage.

In addition, the Board Recommends the following protocols:

Patients should be screened for active disease prior to providing dental care in the office.

Please take note of:

- Any individual who exhibits or reports signs of acute respiratory illness such as coughing, fever and shortness of breath. Take temperature readings.
- Recent travel to [any locations designated by the CDC to have a Level 3 Travel Health Notice for COVID-19](#). Verify when the patient returned to the United States.
- Close contact with an individual, such as a family member or co-worker, diagnosed with COVID-19 within the last two weeks.

To reduce the production of aerosols during dental treatment, which is also advised during this time of increased transmissibility:

- Avoid or minimize operations that can produce droplets or aerosols; use rubber dams as much as possible.
- Rinse the oral cavity slowly, avoiding unnecessary splatter.
- Use high-speed evacuation for all dental procedures producing an aerosol.
- Have patient use an antimicrobial rinse before starting a dental procedure; ADA suggests using 1% hydrogen peroxide.
- Avoid or minimize procedures that may induce coughing, such as taking routine intraoral X-rays.

[Interim CDC guidance for businesses and employers](#) recommends that:

- Employers encourage employees who report symptoms of acute respiratory illness to stay home and not return to work until they are free of symptoms for at least 24 hours without the use of fever relieving or symptom altering medications.
- If an employee appears to be sick upon arrival to work, they should be separated from other employees and sent home immediately.
- Employees cover a cough or sneeze with a tissue and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe.
- Employees wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not readily available, an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol can be used.
- Clean and disinfect public areas frequently, including door handles, chairs and bathrooms.

CDC recommends healthcare facilities, including dental offices, screen patients before proceeding with an appointment. Information to take note of:

- Any individual who exhibits or reports signs of acute respiratory illness such as coughing, fever and shortness of breath.
- Recent travel [to any locations that have a Level 3 Travel Health Notice for COVID-19](#). Verify when the patient returned to the United States. If the patient reports that at least two weeks have passed since their return from one of the identified regions and no symptoms have presented, the dental office can proceed with the appointment. When local, state or federal public health officials declare the disease is at the community level, screening for travel is not necessary.
- Close contact with an individual diagnosed with COVID-19.

Lastly, and for some guidance in how your office(s) should protect the public exposure and its staff, you may want to consider requesting your patients to complete a Medical History Addendum. [Click here for an example](#).