

*The National Society of Dental Practitioners and the Dentist's Advantage Insurance Program for Dentists*

## **RISK MANAGEMENT ALERT**

### **Coronavirus (COVID-19) and the dental practice**

The dental healthcare community is taking urgent action to help protect patients and providers alike from the novel coronavirus (COVID-19). As of March 18<sup>th</sup>, the American Dental Association ([ADA](#)), the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention ([CDC](#)), and [CMS](#) Administrator Seema Verma have urged all dentists to cancel, or at least postpone, all elective and non-urgent dental visits.

The best source of information related to COVID-19 is the [CDC](#). The CDC has issued a [public health reminder](#) that dental health care personnel should prioritize urgent and emergency visits and procedures now and for the coming several weeks. To preserve personal protective equipment and patient care supplies, and ensure staff and patient safety, the CDC advises that all routine and elective dental treatment be postponed.

Additionally, as of March 16<sup>th</sup>, the [ADA](#) recommended dentists nationwide postpone elective procedures for the next three weeks. Concentrating on emergency dental care will allow dentists to care for emergency patients and alleviate the burden that dental emergencies would place on hospital emergency departments.

[CDC guidelines](#) note if urgent dental treatment is necessary, dentists should work with medical providers to determine appropriate precautions to take on a case-by-case basis to avoid spreading diseases among patients, visitors, and staff.

For those dental practices prioritizing urgent and emergency visits and procedures, we recommend that providers, patients, and the public exercise extreme precaution to minimize the potential for transferring and contracting this illness. The best source of information related to the prevention and treatment of COVID-19 is the CDC's interim guidance for [infection prevention and control](#). Further, the [FDA](#) is the best source of information regarding [PPE supply shortages](#), and reporting shortages.

Dentists are urged to monitor the CDC's [COVID-19 situation webpage](#) for updated insights. Dentists are also reminded that [standard precautions](#) should be taken with all patients, at all times.

#### **For more information on COVID-19:**

- CDC, Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) situation webpage: [www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html)
- World Health Organization, Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) rolling updates: [www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/events-as-they-happen](http://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/events-as-they-happen)
- ADA, Infectious Diseases: 2019 Novel Coronavirus: <https://success.ada.org/en/practice-management/patients/infectious-diseases-2019-novel-coronavirus>
- Academy of General Dentistry: COVID-19 Information: <https://agd.org/coronavirus>

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### **For more information on infection control and sterilization in the dental healthcare setting:**

- CDC, Infection Prevention & Control in Dental Settings: [www.cdc.gov/oralhealth/infectioncontrol/index.html](http://www.cdc.gov/oralhealth/infectioncontrol/index.html)
- ADA, Infection Control and Sterilization: [www.ada.org/en/member-center/oral-health-topics/infection-control-resources](http://www.ada.org/en/member-center/oral-health-topics/infection-control-resources).
- U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), N95 Respirators and Surgical Masks (Face Masks): [www.fda.gov/medical-devices/personal-protective-equipment-infection-control/n95-respirators-and-surgical-masks-face-masks](http://www.fda.gov/medical-devices/personal-protective-equipment-infection-control/n95-respirators-and-surgical-masks-face-masks)
- CDC, Healthcare Supply of Personal Protective Equipment: [www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/healthcare-supply-ppe.html](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/healthcare-supply-ppe.html)
- See OSHA's [Standards](#) page for additional information on OSHA requirements, or review [OSHA's recommendations specific to COVID-19](#). To get OSHA advice, file a complaint by phone, or report an emergency, [contact your nearest OSHA office](#), or calling OSHA toll-free at (800) 321-OSHA (6742).

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