



May 4, 2020

Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) and Your Oral Health

Staying safe means staying at home. Be sure to make time for healthy activities like exercising, eating well, relaxing, connecting with family and friends on the phone or computer, and maintaining your oral health. These actions keep you and your immune system healthy.

What is COVID-19 and who is at risk?

COVID-19 is a respiratory illness that can spread from person to person. The virus that causes COVID-19 is a novel coronavirus first identified during an investigation in 2019. Everyone exposed to the virus is at risk, but older adults and those with chronic diseases (cardiovascular disease, diabetes, asthma, cancer, and other underlying medical conditions) are at higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19.

Are dental offices included in the Governor's order for business closures?

No. The Governor's order is for non-health services, such as restaurants and hair salons. However, on March 17, 2020, dental offices were asked to postpone elective procedures, surgeries and non-urgent visits, but be available for emergencies. Some dental offices have chosen to close; others remain open with limited hours or have staff available by phone.

When can dental offices resume all services?

A date has not yet been determined and will be based on guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the American Dental Association (ADA) and the Illinois Department of Public Health. The availability of personal protective equipment (PPE) and testing, as well as the burden of COVID-19 illness will be key factors in making a decision.

Why is it recommended to postpone routine or elective care?

Many dental procedures produce an aerosol. When this occurs in patients with COVID-19, there is risk of spread to dental office staff and patients. This measure supports recommendations to stay-at-home and conserves masks and other PPE for urgent procedures and front-line health care workers.

What are examples of elective/ routine procedures?

Preventive procedures such as dental cleanings for patients without systemic or periodontal disease.

What can I do?

Oral health should be a priority. There is a lot you can do through simple day-to-day habits.

- Brush twice daily for two minutes with a fluoridated toothpaste
- Properly floss and brush/clean your tongue once daily
- Never share a toothbrush
- Change your toothbrush every 3 months or sooner if you are sick
- Drink plenty of fluoridated water
- Limit starchy or sugary foods and drinks
- Resist unhealthy habits to manage stress (smoking, consuming alcohol, biting fingernails)



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If your gums bleed while brushing or flossing, continue to brush and floss gently and thoroughly. Often when gum health improves, bleeding decreases. Contact your dentist when COVID-19 restrictions for non-urgent care are lifted.

What should I do if I have dental treatments not completed or care that is in process?

- **For periodontal disease** - make sure that you continue to brush your teeth with fluoridated toothpaste twice a day. The toothbrush should be angled where the teeth and gums meet. Flossing at least one time per day should also be part of your daily routine. You can add a mouth rinse, such as Listerine or CloSYS, to decrease the number of bacteria in your mouth.
- **For untreated dental cavities** - brushing your teeth with fluoridated toothpaste, flossing, and drinking water is helpful. To this routine, adding the use of sugar free or xylitol containing gum, eliminating sugar and carbohydrate snacks can help stop cavities from developing further.
- **For temporary crowns, temporary fillings, and in process root canal treatments** - clean area carefully and avoid chewing gum, chewy/sticky foods and chewing on hard items, such as popcorn or ice chips. It is important to keep your tooth sealed. If you experience any problems, contact your dentist.

What are urgent or emergent needs?

Bleeding, acute pain or infection, and dental trauma are examples. Denture and some orthodontic issues impacting function may also be considered.

Dental care that should be taken care of by a dentist include:

- Bleeding that doesn't stop
- Painful swelling in or around your mouth
- Pain in a tooth, teeth or jawbone
- Gum infection with pain or swelling
- After surgery treatment (dressing change, stitch/suture removal)
- Broken or knocked-out tooth
- Denture adjustment for people receiving radiation or other treatment for cancer
- Snipping or adjusting wire of braces that hurts your cheek or gums
- Biopsy of abnormal tissue

But before you go outside the safety of your home:

- A. Contact your regular dentist's office. They should have a plan to refer you for limited care to address urgent issues.
 1. Communicate your problem by:
 - Telephone
 - FaceTime or Skype
 - Facebook Messenger video chat
 - Google Hangouts video
 - Texting
 - Digital photo sharing



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2. Be prepared to answer questions
 - About fever (have a current temperature reading)
 - Dry cough
 - Trouble Breathing
3. Accept that in some cases, definitive care may not be safe to provide

Your dentist will be able to provide care to alleviate pain, swelling, or other urgent issues. However, current treatment options may be limited as many treatments aerosolize COVID-19.

Is dental care safe during COVID-19?

There are no documented cases of COVID-19 spreading from a dental care provider to a patient, however there is still a lot of missing data. The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) considers dental procedures that generate aerosols a high-risk interaction, due to the prolonged and close contact with saliva, blood, and respiratory secretions.

Dental offices have traditionally had high adherence to infection control procedures using PPE and cleaning surfaces with high level disinfectant. This combination has resulted in a history of safety. Additional PPE and disinfection are required for safe care during this time of COVID-19, including use of N95 mask and other air processing measures.

What is aerosol and how does it relate to COVID-19 and dental care?

- Aerosol is a spray. During some dental care procedures, such as cleanings and fillings, an air-water spray is produced.
- COVID-19 is thought to be transmitted through respiratory droplets. When someone with the infection coughs, sneezes, or speaks, particles or droplets containing the virus may be transmitted to another person or a surface.
- Virus material has been found to exist in saliva, but further research is needed to understand ways to minimize risk.
- Many procedures do not produce an aerosol, such as suture removal, snipping protruding orthodontic wires, examination, X-rays, removal of debris via cotton or brush, simple extractions, and temporary fillings.

How can patients support safety at dental offices?

- Understand your dentist may need extra measures and more time to keep the office safe, including requiring patients and family to wait in cars and not sit in the waiting room.
- More PPE and cleaning may be required, which can result in the need for more time between patients.
- Inform the dental staff if you've been sick, been tested for COVID-19, or had recently been quarantined.
- If you have any COVID-19 symptoms, do not go to the dentist. Contact your physician who may suggest you be tested.

Are dental offices testing for COVID-19?

- Knowing the COVID-19 status of patients is important for safe care, so testing measures performed by dentists is a goal for the future. Some dentists may order tests for patients and others could test in the future.
- When point of care testing is available, dental staff may also test themselves.



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If you do not have a regular source of dental care, make a contact through one of the sources below. These are searchable by your home ZIP code.

1. "Find a Dentist" for Illinois State Dental Society (ISDS) member dentist directory: <https://www.isds.org/for-the-public/find-a-dentist>
2. "Find a Dental Clinic" resource on the ISDS website: <https://www.isds.org/for-the-public/find-a-dental-clinic>. This is a listing of clinics for people with limited financial ability.
3. Illinois' Federally Qualified Health Centers: <https://findahealthcenter.hrsa.gov>. These centers are for people who are low income, uninsured, or are undocumented residents. See listing below of those open for urgent/emergency care.
4. Several local health departments have an oral health program. See listing below of those open for urgent/emergency care.
5. Illinois has three dental schools. Information about accessing urgent dental care is available by calling or visiting their website.

University of Illinois – Chicago

312-996-8636

<https://dentistry.uic.edu/patients/appointments>

Southern Illinois University- Alton

618-474-7000

<https://www.siue.edu/dental/campus-community/patient-clinics.shtml>

Midwestern University – Downers Grove

630-743-4500

<https://www.mwuclinics.com/illinois/services/dental>



Federally Qualified Health Centers with Open Oral Health Programs

Aunt Martha's in Carpentersville

3003 Wakefield Drive, Carpentersville, IL 60110

847-551-8009

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday 8 a.m. - 2 p.m.

Aunt Martha's Women Health Center

233 W. Joe Orr Road, Chicago Heights, IL 60411

877-692-8686

Monday-Friday 8 a.m. - 2 p.m.

Central Counties Health Centers, Inc.

2239 E. Cook St., Springfield, IL 62703

217-788-2300

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday 8 a.m.- 5 p.m.; Wednesday 10 a.m. -7 p.m.

Not using teledentistry

Erie Foster Avenue Health Center

5215 N. California Ave., 7th floor, Chicago IL 60625 (New patients - children under 18/Erie medical patients)

312-666-3494

Monday and Wednesday 10 a.m. - 7 p.m.; Tuesday, Thursday and Friday 8:30 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.

Using teledentistry

Friend Health Western

5843 S. Western Ave., Chicago, IL

773-434-8600

9 a.m. - 5 p.m.

We are currently taking phone calls for patients at highest risk of COVID-19 and/or if they are symptomatic.

Greater Elgin Family Care Center

450 Dundee Ave., Elgin, IL 60120

847-608-1344

Monday-Thursday 10 a.m. - 7:20 p.m., Friday 10 a.m. - 5 p.m., Saturday 8 a.m. - 3 p.m.

Not using teledentistry

Lawndale Christian Health Center Dental Clinic

3750 W. Ogden

872-588-3220

Monday to Friday 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. with last appointment at 4 p.m.

Dentists are screening calls to determine emergency.



Mile Square Health Center

7037 S. Stony Island Ave., Chicago, IL 60649

312-996-2000 and ask for Mile Square Dental

Monday and Thursday 8 a.m.-- 8 p.m.; Wednesday and Friday 8 a.m. -- 5 p.m.; Saturday 8 a.m. - 12 p.m.

Utilizing teledentistry

Have negative pressure space, so we can do simple extractions

PrimeCare Community Health

West Town – 1431 N. Western Ave, Suite 401, Chicago, IL 60622

773-269-5540

Hours are fluid, but for now they are: Monday – Thursday 8:30 a.m. - 3 p.m.; Friday 8 a.m. - 12 p.m.

Using teledentistry phone and video

Rural Health, Inc

513 N. Main St., Anna IL 62906

618-833-4475

Monday – Friday, 8 a.m. - 4 p.m.

SIU Center for Family Medicine clinic

109 3rd St., Lincoln, IL 62656

217-735-2317

Monday – Friday 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. to take calls and a dentist can be reached consultation/teledentistry visits. Patients are seen in the clinic on an as-needed basis (typically 2 days a week).

TCA Health

1029 E. 130th St., Chicago IL, 60628

773-995-6300

Monday – Friday 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Patients are not being seen in the office; using teledentistry

VNA Health Care

400 N. Highland Ave., Aurora IL 60506

630-892-4355

Monday – Friday 8 a.m.- 4 p.m.

Using teledentistry

Whiteside County Health Department

1300 W. 2nd St., Rock Falls, IL 61071

815-626-2230

Monday – Friday (seeing patients) 8 a.m. - 2 p.m.; Monday – Friday (answering phones) 8 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Using teledentistry for current patients

Will County Community Health Center

1106 Neal Ave., Joliet, IL 60433

815-774-7300

Monday – Friday 7:30 a.m. - 4 p.m.; Saturday 7:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

We can screen on phone.



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Local Health Departments with open Oral and Dental Care Programs

Name of Health Department	City	Phone number	Contact	Emergencies oral and dental care only	Patient Qualifiers / Hours
Bond County Health Department	Greenville	618-664-1442	Sean Eifert	Yes	Patients of all ages accepted
Cass County Health Department	Virginia	217-452-3057	Teresa Armstrong	Yes	Patients of all ages accepted
Champaign-Urbana Public Health District	Champaign	217-352-7961	Alicia Ekhoﬀ	Yes	Patients of all ages accepted
Community Health Partnerships	Aurora, Mendota, Harvard	815-943-4339	Ricardo Garcia	Yes	Patients of all ages accepted. Aurora clinic 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. Wed.; Mendota 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. Thurs.; Harvard 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. clinics Mon., Thurs.
Crusaders - Rockford	Rockford	815-490-1600	Dulce Staff Peggy, admin	Yes	Patients of all ages accepted all locations 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.
Douglas County Public Health Department	Tuscola	217-253-4137	Lisa Biehl	Yes	Patients of all ages accepted
DuPage County Health Department	Wheaton	630-221-7340	Beth Enke	Yes	Patients of all ages accepted, but must meet the health depts financial guidelines
Edgar County Public Health Dept.	Paris	217-652-2212	Monica Dunn	Yes	Patients of all ages accepted
Fulton County Health Department	Canton	309-647-1134	Amy Rose	Yes	Patients of all ages accepted
Hancock	Carthage	217-357-2171	Jana West	Yes	Patients of all ages accepted
Knox County Health Department	Galesburg	309-344-2224	Erin Olsen	Yes	Patients of all ages accepted
Lake County Dental Clinic	Waukegan	847-377-8599	Sandy	Yes	Patients of all ages accepted
Macoupin County	Carlinville	217-839-4100	Laura Cox	Yes	Patients of all ages accepted
McLean County Health Department	Bloomington	309-888-5450	Tammy Brooks	Yes	Peds only currently



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Name of Health Department	City	Phone number	Contact	Emergencies oral and dental care only	Patient Qualifiers / Hours
Peoria City/County Health Department	Peoria	309-679-6000	Dr. Susan Bishop	Yes	Patients of all ages accepted
Stevenson County Health Department/Dental	Freeport	815-235-8271	Dr. Grinter	Yes	Patients of all ages accepted
Stickney Public Health District	Stickney	708-458-4126	Dr. Marchese	Yes	Must live in Stickney township all ages
The Children's Clinic (OPRFWS)	Oak Park	708-848-0528	Audrey Griffen	Yes	Under 18 only, no geographical restrictions
Whiteside County Health Department/Dental	Rock Falls	815-626-2230 Ext.1255	Melissa Johnson	Yes	Patients of all ages accepted
Will County Community Health Center	Joliet	815-774-4495	Dr. Garg	Yes	Patients of all ages accepted Mon-Fri 7:30 a.m.-4 p.m. Sat 7:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m. doing phone screenings

For questions and updates:

Illinois Department of Public Health

Office of Health Promotion
Division of Oral Health
Sherri.Foran@illinois.gov

Resources

1. Bushell, G. (2020, March 23). COVID-19: our guide to looking after yourselves and others through better oral hygiene. Retrieved April 1, 2020, from <https://www.dentalhealth.org/blog/covid-19-our-guide-to-looking-after-yourselves-and-others-through-better-oral-hygiene>
2. Minter-Jordan, M. (2020, March 26). Oral Health Matters. Retrieved April 1, 2020, from <https://whatsnew.dentaquest.com/the-impact-of-covid-19-on-the-oral-health-crisis/>
3. What you need to know about COVID-19 Coronavirus Disease. (2020, March 20). Retrieved April 1, 2020, from <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/2019-ncov-factsheet.pdf>
4. Cold and Flu Season: 5 Ways to Care for Your Mouth When You're Sick. Retrieved April 1, 2020, from <https://www.mouthhealthy.org/en/az-topics/c/cold-and-flu-season>