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COVID-19 and going to visit your dentist

The American Dental Association, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the Illinois Department of Public Health have developed science-based precautions for dentists to ensure their patients and the public are protected. Here are some things that will help you have a safe dental appointment.

What you can expect at your next appointment

Before Your Appointment

To help make sure patients coming in for an appointment are healthy, your dental office may call you before your appointment and ask some questions about your present health and may also repeat these questions when you arrive. The dentist's office staff may ask you to limit the number of people you bring to the appointment. That could mean leaving your children at home. Older children may enter the office alone for an appointment while their parent waits outside.

At Your Appointment

Wear a face mask in public and be sure to wear one to your appointment. When you arrive at the dental office, you may be asked to wait outside until they are ready for you. This will lessen the number of people in the office at one time and reduce the amount of time you are close to other people. As you enter the office, your temperature may be taken. Inside the office, things people often touch in the waiting room, such as toys or magazines, may have been removed. They may have hand sanitizer available for you to use and items you touch, such as pens, clipboards, or furniture, may be wiped down. When you are in the dental chair, some things may look different since the last time you were there. The dentist may have covered the computer's keyboard with a onetime use cover that is replaced before each patient is examined. Your dentist may be using different protective gear than they have used at previous appointments, such as different masks, face shields, gowns, and goggles. These additional protections help protect both you and the dentist.

After Your Appointment

After your appointment, staff will carefully clean the areas where you have been before a new patient is seen with sanitizers active against the virus that causes COVID-19. This helps reduce the risk of the virus being passed to others.

If you start feeling ill with COVID-19 symptoms within two days of your appointment, call your medical doctor for advice on getting tested. You may have been carrying the virus at the time of your appointment without knowing it. Anyone who you met during that time could be at risk of getting sick. If your virus test comes back positive, make sure you call to tell your dentist.

Regular dental visits are an important part of your overall health. Be sure to schedule dental checkups once local community leaders allow dental practices to reopen. Your dentist will make sure your visit is as safe as possible for everyone.

Resources

American Dental Association

<https://www.mouthhealthy.org/en>

[Center for Disease Control and Prevention](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/communication/toolkits/general-public.html)

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/communication/toolkits/general-public.html>

Illinois Department of Public Health

<https://www.dph.illinois.gov/topics-services/diseases-and-conditions/diseases-a-z-list/coronavirus/media-publications>