



Indiana Dental Association COVID-19 Task Force: Interim Guidance and Recommendations

IDA President Dr. Steve Ellinwood created the COVID-19 Task Force to develop and distill a series of best practices for PPE guidance and patient safety using materials from the Center for Disease Control, the Indiana State Department of Health, the Occupational Health and Safety Administration, and the American Dental Association.

On Monday April 20, 2020 Governor Holcomb issued [Executive Order 20-22](#) which raised the likelihood that dental offices will be allowed to return to practice as early as April 27, 2020. This Executive Order allowing non-emergency and routine treatment will be revisited every seven days for the remainder of the crisis.

Important note: This guidance is only a recommendation from the COVID-19 Task Force and should not be construed as legal advice. These guidelines shall apply per CDC recommendations only for medium risk dental care. If new information arises from state, federal, or agency sources that contradicts any suggestions contained herein, you are required to comply with the updated state/federal/agency guidance and are encouraged to do any follow-up research necessary to ensure that your practice is complying with the most recent guidance or law. In addition, we have included hyperlink citations for most—if not all—of the recommendations below; if you have any questions or concerns about this guidance, feel free to reach out to the COVID-19 Task Force or any member of the IDA staff.

Before Dental Care Begins: Dental Office Management

- All Dental Health Care Personnel (“DHCP”) should self-monitor for any respiratory symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath, sore throat) and check their temperature twice a day, regardless of the presence of symptoms. Dental offices should create a plan for whom to contact if an employee develops fever or respiratory symptoms.¹
- Conduct an inventory of available PPE supplies [e.g., masks, gowns, gloves, and face shields].²
- Remove magazines, reading materials, toys and other objects that may be touched by others and which are not easily disinfected.³
- Print and place signage (found at: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/stop-the-spread-of-germs.pdf>) in the dental office for instructing patients on standard recommendations for respiratory hygiene/cough etiquette and social distancing.⁴
- Schedule appointments far enough apart to minimize possible contact with other patients in the waiting room. Allow time to disinfect and set up the room for the next patient.⁵
- Surfaces such as door handles, chairs, desks, elevators, and bathrooms should be cleaned and disinfected frequently.
- DHCPs should change from scrubs to personal clothing before returning home.

¹ <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/guidance-risk-assesment-hcp.html>

² <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/healthcare-facilities/steps-to-prepare.html>

³ <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/28916372>; <https://www.alabamapublichealth.gov/oralhealth/assets/cov-dental-protocol-031720.pdf>

⁴ <https://www.cdc.gov/oralhealth/infectioncontrol/pdf/safe-care2.pdf>; <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/php/risk-assessment.html>

⁵ <https://success.ada.org/en/practice-management/patients/coronavirus-frequently-asked-questions>

Patient Safety: Effective Screening and Office Practices

- Screen patient before the visit. Suggested questions to ask include: (1) Is the patient currently experiencing or has experienced in the last three weeks, signs of acute respiratory illness such as coughing, fever, and shortness of breath? (2) Has the patient had close contact with an individual diagnosed with COVID-19. If available, other testing used could include: temperature, pulse oximeter, and other COVID-19 testing.
- If a patient has a fever associated with a dental diagnosis (e.g., pulpal and periapical dental pain and intraoral swelling is present), but no other signs/symptoms of COVID-19 (e.g., fever, sore throat, cough, difficulty breathing), they can be seen in dental settings with appropriate protocols and PPE in place.⁶
- CDC recommends that only asymptomatic patients, patients who have tested negative for COVID-19 infection, or recovered patients (after 3 days since resolution of signs and symptoms) be seen in dental settings.⁷
- DHCP should ensure that there are appropriate supplies for infection control etiquette, including (but not limited to) alcohol-based hand rub with 60-95% alcohol, tissues, and no-touch receptacles for disposal at healthcare facility entrances, waiting rooms, and patient check-ins.⁸
- Allow patients to wait in their cars and call the office to check in when they have arrived. They may wait in their personal vehicle or outside the facility where they can be contacted by mobile phone when it is their turn to be seen.⁹
- Discourage patients from bringing companions to their appointment, except for instances where the patient requires assistance (e.g., pediatric patients, people with special needs, elderly patients, etc.).¹⁰

During and After Dental Care: Management of Personal Protective Equipment (“PPE”)

If your dental office is unable to secure the appropriate PPE to safely operate, your practice should not reopen until it is obtained.

- Reduce aerosol production as much as possible, as the transmission of COVID-19 seems to occur via droplets or aerosols, and DHCP should prioritize the use of hand instrumentation.
- Ensure DHCP practice strict adherence to hand hygiene, including: before and after contact with patients; after contact with contaminated surfaces or equipment; and after removing PPE.
- The CDC has published guidance on preferred and acceptable PPE¹¹, additional information can be found [here](#).

⁶ https://www.ada.org/~/media/CPS/Files/COVID/ADA_Int_Guidance_Mgmt_Emerg-Urg_Dental_COVID19.pdf

⁷ <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/infection-control/control-recommendations.html>

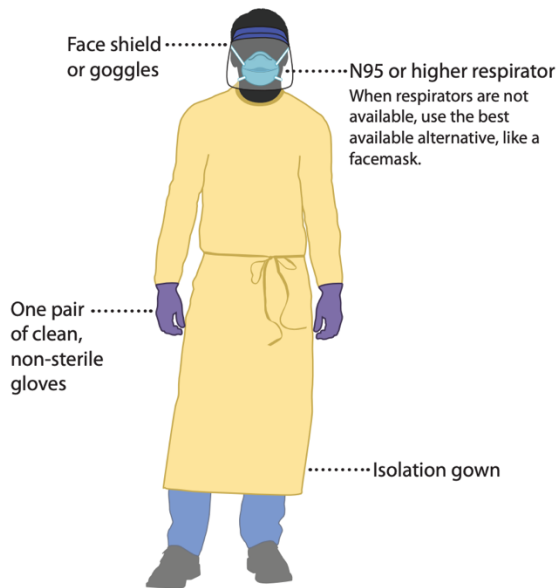
⁸ <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/infection-control/control-recommendations.html>

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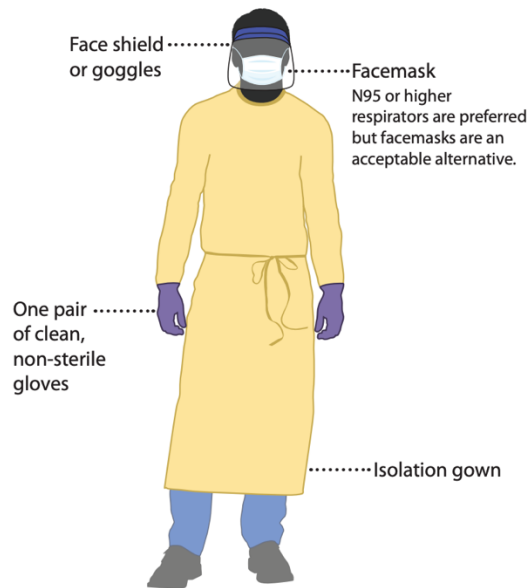
¹⁰ https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/infection-control/control-recommendations.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fhcp%2Finfection-control.html#manage_access

COVID-19 Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for Healthcare Personnel

Preferred PPE – Use N95 or Higher Respirator



Acceptable Alternative PPE – Use Facemask



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cdc.gov/COVID19

Closing Remarks

In his April 20, 2020 address, Governor Holcomb was very clear that the ability to reopen to elective and routine procedures in Indiana will be in place as long as the frontline hospital systems are able to secure their much-needed PPE. The IDA knows that obtaining your own supply of PPE for your office is a problem and the task force will continue to work on this supply chain issue going forward.

¹¹ https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/COVID-19_PPE_illustrations-p.pdf