

Information on Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) for the Public

Are dental offices open during the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak?

Dental clinics across Newfoundland and Labrador have been directed to close for regular dental services due to the pandemic related to COVID-19. Emergency services are still being completed (infection, acute pain, bleeding, trauma, etc.).

Is it safe to see my dentist during COVID-19?

Yes, the public health risk associated with COVID-19 is low for Canada. Patient safety is always a top priority for the dental community. Dental offices across Canada follow the strictest infection prevention and control procedures each day. This includes dentists, the dental team and office staff wearing the proper protective equipment during all treatments for patients and when interacting with patients. Dental offices also follow stringent requirements for cleaning, including but are not limited to:

- treatment surfaces which are disinfected between every patient visit;
- floors, doorknobs and transaction equipment at the front desk are disinfected regularly;
- washrooms are cleaned daily and more frequently; and
- hand sanitizer is available for use.

If you feel well and do not show flu-like symptoms, it is safe to visit your dentist. Keeping a healthy mouth is an important part of leading a healthy life. Just like brushing twice a day and flossing daily, keeping your dental appointments is vital to maintaining your dental health and your overall health. If you get a reminder about your upcoming dental appointment, please continue to see your dentist.

I am not feeling that well. What do I do about my dental appointment?

If you are sick, show flu-like symptoms, or may have come in contact with someone who has COVID-19, make sure to stay home and reschedule your appointment. Should any of the following apply to you, please contact your dental office to see about rescheduling your appointment, and contact your local public health authority:

- if you are experiencing mild or severe symptoms of fever, cough, or having difficulty breathing/shortness of breath;
- if you have travelled to any of the areas with the ongoing spread of COVID-19;
- if you live with someone who has been to the areas with the ongoing spread of COVID-19;
- if you have been in close contact with a person known to have COVID-19 or who is experiencing symptoms similar to the Flu or COVID-19

What can I do to protect myself and others?

The COVID-19 spreads from person to person through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes. There are currently no specific treatments for the coronavirus; however, follow these precautions as recommended by the Public Health Agency of Canada and the World Health Organization:

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue, or into your elbow, not your hands.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe.
- Wash your hands regularly with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
- Stay home if you are sick. Most people with the virus do not require any specific treatment.
- Contact your healthcare professional if you exhibit symptoms associated with the virus. Call ahead before going to your doctor.
- If you have been in close contact with a person who has tested positive for the coronavirus, or have recently traveled from an area with ongoing spread of the coronavirus, contact your healthcare professional or local public health authority.

I heard that there is a mask shortage. What is the situation in dental offices?

While dentists are being limited by suppliers on the number of masks they are able to purchase at a time, dentists across Canada continue to see patients while following the proper infection prevention and control standards.

The Canadian Dental Association (CDA) is in frequent contact with Government Officials and industry partners to get the latest developments on the COVID-19 situation and personal protective equipment supplies across Canada and shares new information with Provincial Dental Associations to which dentists are members of.

Where can I get more information about COVID-19?

Please visit the Public Health Agency of Canada's COVID-19 webpage (https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection.html?utm_campaign=gc-hc-sc-coronavirusoutbreak-1920-0165-9221800776&utm_medium=search&utm_source=google-ads-96470960074&utm_content=text-en-425457848789&utm_term=%2Bcovid%20%2B19%20%2Bcanada) for current insight on the pandemic.

The risk of transmission in Canada remains low for the general population at this time, but this could change rapidly. The Public Health Agency of Canada offers helpful information about COVID-19 and many other tips for taking standard precautions to help protect you and your loved ones.