

IPC GUIDELINES RELATED TO COVID-19 MANAGEMENT FOR ASYMPTOMATIC PATIENTS

MARCH 28, 2020

In direct consultation with CEO of Shared Health MB, Chief Medical Officer of Shared Health MB and Chief Nursing Officer of Shared Health MB, and following the Directive by Dr. Brent Roussin, Chief Provincial Public Health Officer;

The Manitoba Dental Association is strongly recommending that all non-essential and elective dental services be suspended until further notice. Only Emergency treatment should continue.

Management of COVID-19 is a fluid situation.

Due to the fluid nature of the COVID-19 pandemic dental services protocols, including this one, may change. Please visit the MDA website for resources and be sure to subscribe to the MDA EAlert system .

Dental Office Safety and Operations:

- The Manitoba Dental Association (MDA) is strongly recommending that all non-essential and elective dental services should be suspended until further notice. Only Emergency treatment should continue
- Emergency treatment includes treatment due to a significant infection, acute pain that cannot be managed pharmacologically, oro-facial trauma or prolonged bleeding, all of which as a result require immediate care. The MDA strongly advises that the dentist exercise reasonable and prudent judgment for assessing risk in these circumstances.
- Medical management through pharmacological modalities, where appropriate, is strongly recommended
- This is a reminder to members to manage their emergency treatment for asymptomatic patients only as screened by the most recent Shared Health screening checklist <https://sharedhealthmb.ca/covid19/screening-tool/> with appropriate PPE.
- Pre-screening phone calls, online screening, and screening upon patient arrival should be carefully followed to ensure that only asymptomatic emergent patients are being considered to be seen in person.
- Any patient who is symptomatic, shows flu-like symptoms (as per the most recent Shared Health MB screening tool), or has come in contact with someone who has COVID-19, should stay home, and contact Health Links at (204) 788-8200 or toll-free 1-888-315-9257.

What should my office do if we suspect a patient has COVID-19?

- If pre-screening reveals a patient who is symptomatic, do not consider treating this cohort of patient until symptoms resolve.
- The Patient should Contact Health Links at (204) 788-8200 or toll-free 1-888-315-9257 if they suspect they have COVID-19.
- Patients currently in self isolation should not be treated.
- Symptomatic patients should not be treated in a regular dental operatory.
- If patients report without notice or appointment and report any symptoms, patients should be asked to don a mask, use hand sanitizer and be dismissed. The Patient should Contact Health Links at (204) 788-8200 or toll-free 1-888-315-9257 if they suspect they have COVID-19.

What are the standard precautions I need to take as an oral healthcare provider?

Screen patients before their dental appointment according to the most recent Shared Health MB recommendations found at <https://sharedhealthmb.ca/covid19/screening-tool/>

Any Patients who do not pass the screening tool for COVID-19 should not be considered to be seen in a community clinic until further notice.

For the protection of you, your staff, the patient and other patients, symptomatic patients should not be treated in a regular dental operator.

For asymptomatic patients who pass the Shared Health MB screening test and have an emergency what are the standard precautions to take?

- Dentists should manage the case over the telephone to assess the severity of the emergency. Consideration of in person management can be triaged and recommended after that contact.
- **Medical management through pharmacological modalities, where appropriate, is strongly recommended.**
- Re-screen patients using the most recent Shared Health Screening tool upon arrival.
<https://sharedhealthmb.ca/covid19/screening-tool/>
- COVID-19 is highly contagious and is transmitted via droplet. It is unknown at this time with certainty as to the length of viability of the virus outside the human body. Because of the nature of the infection, there is a higher risk of transmission of the virus when working in the oropharynx or oral cavity.
- Aerosol Generating Medical Procedures (AGMP) present the biggest risk in dental procedures. Aerosols can be generated with dental equipment such as handpieces, suctions, air/water syringes, ultrasonics among others. **Do not generate aerosols.**
- There are increasing number of COVID-19 cases in Canada that appear to be non-travel related, therefore associated with community spread.
- With the lack of definitive evidence, there is a possibility that asymptomatic patients may be carriers of COVID-19.
- Until more information is available, we are recommending the following:
 - Non-Aerosolizing procedures:
 - Gloves, ASTM Level 3 mask, Eye protection, (N95 mask if available)
 - Potentially Aerosolizing procedures:
 - Gloves, N95 Mask, fluid resistant gown, protective eyewear or face shield.
- Continue to practice standard precautions for cleaning and disinfection strategies in the treatment area and in the reprocessing area. COVID-19 is an enveloped virus. MDA guidelines require use of label claims with mycobacteriocidal, virucidal, fungicidal and bactericidal disinfectant and a drug identification number [DIN]. Follow the manufacturer's instructions for use and for contact time.
- Identify high touchpoint non-treatment areas such as the front desk, the waiting room and the washroom. Equip your office staff with the appropriate cleaning products to keep these high touchpoint areas clean, including countertops, door handles and transaction pads at the front desk.
- Equip the dental office washroom with disinfecting cleaning products and ensure to clean the area according to office policy (e.g. after every use/hourly/twice daily).
- For patients entering the office, provide alcohol based hand rub (70-90%), provide tissues and no-touch receptacles in which to throw away used tissues.
- In the waiting room, maintain the current recommended social distance and practices, such as:
 - avoid shaking hands;
 - keep a separation of two metres; and
- encourage appropriate social distancing and minimize waiting room use for patients or their escorts. Consider having patients/escorts wait in their vehicles until staff notify them to present.
- Place COVID-19 awareness posters up in high visibility areas, such as the front entrance and at the reception desk. Such resources are available at Shared Health MB.
- Dental Health Care Providers must limit chair time as much as possible.

Considerations when providing treatment after proper screening

- Maintain a strong triage by telephone or other means
- Early evidence suggests use of pre-procedural rinse with 5cc 1% Peroxide rinse for 30 seconds prior to examination of the oral cavity
- Use of Rubber dam isolation
- Consider alternating operator use to allow for time between patients for proper disinfection.

- Spoon excavation of decay
- Possible Application of Silver Diamine Fluoride

Waiting Room Guidance

To prevent over-crowding of waiting areas or the possible spread of infection:

- Have patients wait in their cars instead of the waiting areas to prevent inadvertent spread of the virus. Call the patient when the operatory is ready for treatment
- Have the patient use hand sanitizer when entering and exiting the office
- Stagger appointment times to reduce waiting room exposure
- Alternate treatment rooms for consecutive patients
- Limit access to waiting room use to only patients
- Remove all magazines/toys etc. from waiting area to prevent contamination

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Supplies

Some PPE supplies are running low. What is the situation for dentistry?

- In past events of dental equipment shortages, one of the most effective approaches has been for dental professionals to work together at the local level to share specific items that are in short supply.
- The MDA is working with Provincial Authorities to help alleviate the shortage.