

COVID-19 (Coronavirus) PSA

Dear NDA Colleagues,

My first priority as your NDA President is the health and well-being of our membership and the communities that we serve. The NDA Leadership has been following the development of coronavirus (COVID-19) closely for some time now, and our goal is to keep you and your oral healthcare team informed. This new virus has been named “SARS-CoV-2” and the disease it causes has been named “coronavirus disease 2019” (COVID-19).

While there is still more to learn about the coronavirus, it is similar to other viruses. We know that the coronavirus spreads easily from person to person, (within 6 feet) primarily through respiratory droplets that are produced when coughing or sneezing. It is transmitted when one is exposed to these droplets by touching an object/surface, or coming in close proximity with an infected person and then touching your mouth, nose or eyes. Because of this, surfaces and objects are the major way that the virus is spread. The spread of the virus can occur prior to experiencing signs and symptoms such as coughing and sneezing (however, this is not considered the primary mode of transmission). The virus has been able to spread through “community spread” in some parts of the country. This means that individuals have been infected with the virus and it is not known how or where they became exposed. **Currently, there is no vaccine to protect us from this new virus** and no medications approved to treat it. Nonpharmaceutical interventions will be the most important response strategy to try to delay the spread of the virus and reduce the impact of the disease. Some examples of personal strategies would include coughing/sneezing into the inside of your elbow, staying home when you feel sick, and washing your hands with soap and water for 20 seconds. Community strategies would include social distancing in schools, workplaces and events.

Signs and symptoms of the coronavirus that are similar to the flu or a cold:

- Mild to severe respiratory illness
- Shortness of breath
- Fever
- Cough

What can we do to help protect ourselves from the coronaviruses in our offices and in general?

Wash hands often with soap and water preferably for 20 seconds

- If no soap available use hand sanitizer with 60% alcohol
- Wash hands:
 - o Before eating, after blowing your nose, and after coughing and or sneezing
- Cover coughs or sneeze with tissue and throw that tissue away
- Avoid touching your face, eyes, mouth or nose with unwashed hands
- Cough into the inside of your elbow
- Social distancing (at least six feet)
- Stay home when you are sick
- Clean and disinfect with wipes or spray, frequently touched objects at work, home, on planes etc.
- Do not share personal hygiene items
- Avoid drinking out of the same cup or using the same utensils as others
- Avoid sleeping in the same bed with someone who is ill
- Avoid close contact without protection with those known to have the coronavirus

Masks should be worn by healthcare workers, and patients being screened and receiving care for the virus to protect others.

Follow the recommendations of your local public health officials and the CDC (see some links below).

COVID-19 and NON aerosol-generating procedures

- Surgical (medical) mask (according to manufacturer’s recommendation for usage)
- Gown
- Gloves
- Eye protection (e.g., goggles or face shield)

COVID-19 and Aerosol-generating procedures

- N95 respirator (or equivalent) with aerosol-generating procedures (according to manufacturer’s recommendation for usage)
- Gown
- Gloves
- Eye protection (e.g., goggles or face shield)

What should I do if I begin to feel sick?

- Call your healthcare provider
- Call Urgent Care and share your concerns, and they will guide you
- Stay home, do not go to work, school or any public area

What is the National Dental Association doing around the concerns of the coronavirus?

- Continuing to closely monitor all local and national activities as it relates to the coronavirus, and share up to date information via the NDA website and or emails in an effort to help keep you, your family, your staff, patients and communities safe.
- Provide information specific to oral healthcare providers
- Provide information around resources designed to help to mitigate the negative impact to your practices and patient outcomes. Resources such as financial relief to small business owners (see links below)

For additional information, please visit:

<https://www.cdc.gov/>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/index.html>

CMS released info coverage and benefits related to COVID-19 for Medicaid/CHIP. This is from March 5 and was a reminder to members

<https://www.cms.gov/files/document/03052020-medicaid-covid-19-fact-sheet.pdf>

<https://www.who.int/>

Other sources that may be of interest to our constituents as it relates to small businesses:

<https://smallbiztrends.com/2020/02/coronavirus-and-small-business.html>

<https://finance.yahoo.com/news/trump-offering-coronavirus-relief-small-013746219.html>

<https://finance.yahoo.com/news/u-loan-50-billion-small-031122787.html>

<https://healthsectorcouncil.org/>, see link on this page focused on expected telehealth surge

**Sheila L. Armstrong, DDS, FACD, FICD
96th President, National Dental Association.**