

UPDATED RECOMMENDATION MARCH 24, 2020  
NOVEL CORONAVIRUS DISEASE 2019 (COVID-19)

As Dentists, Hygienists, and staff, we have a responsibility to our communities to do our part in limiting the spread of the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19). Members of the dental team are at an increased risk of both transmission and contraction of COVID-19 as a majority of the procedures performed create significant aerosols in the operatory. As such, the West Virginia Board of Dentistry will formally request the Governor's consideration in making these newest recommendations mandatory as to best protect the patients, our licensees, and all citizens of this Great State.

Due in large part to the first instance of community spread in West Virginia, the West Virginia Board of Dentistry would like to adjust its current recommendations regarding COVID-19. The Board requests the cooperation of its licensees to limit their practice to EMERGENT procedures only, while also keeping aerosol formation to a minimum, until at least April 3, 2020.

For purposes of the COVID-19 pandemic, emergent procedures consist of, but are not limited to, those procedures required to prevent a potentially life threatening situation and those needed to relieve severe pain and/or risk of infection.

For clarification, examples of NON-EMERGENT procedures include but are not limited to:

- Initial or periodic examination
- Dental hygiene and preventative therapy
- Orthodontic procedures other than those that address acute issues
- Extraction or restorative procedures of asymptomatic teeth
- Cosmetic procedures
- Initiation of crown, fixed or removal partial denture, or complete denture procedures

When patients present for emergent dental care who are non-symptomatic and have passed screening measures, such dental care is better handled in a dental office rather than an emergency room or urgent care facility. Dentists are much better equipped to address dental emergencies than medical facilities. Further, this is recommended as to not hinder the ability of emergency rooms and other medical facilities to handle non-dental matters.

Should a symptomatic patient require emergency dental treatment, the dentist and the patient's medical providers should work together to determine the appropriate precautions on a case-by-case basis. It may be necessary for treatment to be performed in a healthcare setting that offers the additional protections required in these cases.

As the Board has stated before, this situation is fluid and the Board will revisit these requests and recommendations when it is deemed necessary.