



SHERIDAN *DENTAL*

As we prepare for the flu season following the coronavirus pandemic we recognize that little will be returning to normal. By “normal”, we mean the pre-quarantine state. While many are anxious to resume life as we knew it, still others remain apprehensive about the danger of coronavirus’ s continuing spread.

## **CHANGES IN DENTISTRY**

At Sheridan Dental, we have always adhered to strict infection control protocols in order to keep our patients and our team members safe from any transmissible illness. Historically, most of our focus has been on illnesses transmitted through direct contact with blood and/or saliva (HIV, Hepatitis C, etc...). Under pre-COVID-19 infection control standards, there is no risk for transmission of these types of diseases through dental procedures.

What has changed is that coronavirus can be transmitted by aerosols, with the virus contained in tiny, non-visible moisture droplets in the air. This is why we stay six feet away from people in our social distancing and wear masks in public.

There is a lot we do not know about this virus, so things may continue to change as research and information develops over time.

## **HOW WE PLAN TO KEEP YOU SAFE**

We are committed to following the guidelines set forth by our governing bodies and regulatory agencies in the state of Ohio, to prevent the spread of COVID-19 after our offices re-open.

### **PATIENT SCREENINGS.**

We are willing and able to see high risk patients, but those appointments will require special preparation and considerations. If you are high risk and have a dental emergency, please contact Sheridan Dental.

It is important to identify anyone potentially infected with coronavirus before he or she enters our offices. To accomplish this, we will screen patients over the



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phone prior to each appointment, asking pertinent questions about travel, fever, or related symptoms. Here are the three questions we will ask each patient:

1. Have you exhibited any signs of an acute respiratory illness such as fever, coughing or shortness of breath?
2. Have you recently traveled out of the state?
3. Have you had any close contact with any individual diagnosed with or suspected to have COVID-19?

We ask that you assist us in this endeavor by self-screening. If there is any chance that you have been exposed to coronavirus, please reschedule your appointment for a date after a 14-day self-quarantine.

### **PROPER USE OF PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE)**

Due to the increased precautions necessary to fight an air-borne microorganism, you may notice some differences in our appearance. Most importantly, you will not see our faces as we will be wearing masks during any patient interactions. We will add additional PPE including face shields, goggles, and gowns. While we recognize that these measures will make us seem more foreign and could come across as less compassionate in our interactions, please remember that we do these things for both your safety and the safety of all of our team members.

We will also make every effort to use our PPE conscientiously so that we do not impact the availability of necessary equipment for our medical colleagues.

### **INCREASED TIME BETWEEN PATIENTS FOR ROOM STERILIZATION**

It may seem like we are working a little slower than our typical pace. This is because of the need for new room sterilization measures. While we have always disinfected every surface of each room between patients, now we must work to treat the air in the room. This may involve the use of vacuums or UV lights. Regardless of the method, there are two guarantees: 1) It will keep our patients and team members safe. 2) It will take more time and energy.

### **SOCIAL DISTANCING – NO GROUPS OF PEOPLE IN COMMON AREAS**



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No one likes a waiting room anyway, right? In order to comply with social distancing, we will not have patients waiting in a common room. We will work to have as few people in a single space as possible. This may require waiting in your car until called by our personnel and remaining in your dental operatory until we can ensure you are able to check out with no other patients in the same area.

We ask our patients to please make every effort to comply with our new protocols to help us keep our other patients safe and remain safe ourselves.

## **PROCEDURAL CHANGES**

When it comes to the actual dental treatment, you might notice a few other changes. Because the patient cannot wear a mask during dental treatment, we will take other measures to lower the risk of transmitting any virus particles into the air. These could include:

### **1. INSTALLATION OF AUSTIN AIR PURIFIER**

The Austin Air Purifier is designed to remove 95% of all air pollutants as small as 0.1 microns (Covid-19 particles are larger). We are confident that this purifier effectively removes a vast majority of any airborne viruses.

### **2. IMPLEMENTATION OF A COMMERCIAL CLEANING SERVICE**

In addition to our regular disinfection practices, we have added twice weekly cleaning and disinfecting of the office with commercial grade cleaners.

### **3. USE OF DIFFERENT INSTRUMENTS**

Your dentists and dental hygienists use many different specialized instruments as they perform treatment. Various tools create aerosols, and some cause more aerosol production and splatter than others. As we take steps to reduce these aerosols, we may use more hand instruments. What you will notice is fewer instruments that spray air and water. Some of you may rejoice at this news, as



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the cold air and water can be uncomfortable for those with sensitive teeth. What you need to know is that your procedure could take more time. We are willing to work more slowly to keep everyone safe.

#### **4.ADDITION OF BARRIER DEVICES**

Our dentists may use a device called a “rubber dam”. This barrier allows us to isolate the tooth or teeth being treated and prevents contact with saliva. The subsequent aerosol that is produced, since it does not contain saliva, has a much lower risk of carrying the coronavirus.

Unfortunately, there are many dental procedures that do not allow the use of a rubber dam, including professional teeth cleanings and tooth extractions. We will use them whenever possible!

#### **5.USE OF ADDITIONAL SUCTION**

When your dentist or dental hygienist uses an instrument that creates air and water spray, we will use as many suction tools as possible to “catch” any droplets that are formed. We know that adding more things to your mouth during dental treatment rarely improves comfort, and we apologize for any frustration this may cause. Please know that our top priority is your overall health, and we are taking steps that place safety at the top of the list.

## **MORE QUESTIONS ABOUT POST-COVID-19 DENTISTRY?**

Call us today for information about how we are moving forward with patient treatment and complying with governmental and regulatory agency guidelines to keep everyone safe and do our part to “stop the spread”. 614-875-8085