

Interim Emergency Dental Practice Guidance

On March 15, 2020, the Massachusetts Dental Society (MDS) issued guidance strongly recommending that dentists practicing in the Commonwealth close their offices from March 17 to April 6 to patients seeking elective and non-urgent care.

As practitioners transition to an emergency treatment–focused dental practice during this time period, the MDS is offering the following interim guidance to assist dentists in determining which procedures are emergent or urgent and which are elective and non-urgent.

Procedures that are necessary and may be perceived as emergency cases:

- Toothaches: Fractured teeth with associated pain, severe decay
- Symptomatic endodontics
- Completion of cases that are in temporary stage (at the doctor’s discretion)
- Periodontal and endodontic abscesses
- Suture removal
- Orthodontics limited to trauma, trauma from orthodontic appliance (wire/bracket)
- Fractured prosthesis and limited adjustments
- Extraction of symptomatic teeth that likely do not require surgical intervention

Common procedures that are not immediately necessary:

- Routine fillings that do not address or prevent pain or restore normal oral functioning
- New crown and bridge cases that do not involve severe decay or pain
- Recall exams/cleaning
- Dentures
- All orthodontic procedures (including aligner therapy) that do not address infection, restore oral function, are related to trauma, or relieve pain
- Cosmetic/aesthetic dentistry, teeth whitening

We strongly encourage dentists to consider all non-interventional treatments—such as prescribing antibiotics, appropriate pain killers, anti-microbial mouth rinses—prior to initiating any treatments.

If interventional treatment is indicated, we recommend you strongly consider the following added infection control mechanisms:

- Pre-operative mouthwash for patient
- Comprehensive use of rubber dam isolation, high-speed evacuation
- Strict adherence to all OSHA/JCO Materials guidelines
- Strict adherence to all proper hand hygiene, clinical gown, and PPE

This guidance is outside of federal and state authorities and is intended to provide precautionary practice direction prior to having full understanding of the COVID-19 practice implications.

All COVID-19 symptomatic cases, as deemed by the CDC and DPH, must defer treatment and seek immediate medical care. Please consider using all prescriptive tools necessary to delay treatment until further clearance and understanding of the COVID-19 pandemic is conveyed, and more supplies and training are available. Providers, staff, and patients should discuss the possibility of asymptomatic spread of COVID-19, without known exposures or contacts prior to initiating any dental treatment.