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Dear Patients,

I cannot tell you how much we are looking forward to coming back to work and to seeing you. I know you must be concerned about your safety and the wellbeing of your family during these uncertain times. It is why I want to take this time to reassure you that your health and safety is our primary intention.

As dentists, infection control is second nature to us and I must say we have always adhered to the highest standards of safety and NOW during COVID times, we have increased our knowledge, training and elevated our standards of safety and infection control even more. We have taken extra measures to ensure your wellbeing and to minimize the chance of exposure to the virus.

We have created number of checklists to systematically review recommendation and guidelines which we will implement at **EACH** stage of every patient visit from first phone call to the end of the visit and even after patients leave the premises.

Let me share these checklists with you for your awareness and invite you to familiarize yourself with them.

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1) Training and Educating Our Team

One of the most important things we are doing during this time is to train and educate our staff.

- Our team has had refresher training in proper hand washing techniques. This may seem basic; however, it is the most important thing we can do to prevent spread of the virus; yet research shows that it is often poorly complied with and usually not done well. Consequently, we have trained our staff ensuring that our team does it well and often, especially before and after every patient encounter.
- They have practiced the appropriate use of personal protective equipment (PPE) prior to caring for each patient to prevent cross contamination.
- We encourage staff that is not feeling well to proactively stay home for two weeks
- Everyone in the office will have their temperature taken at the beginning of every day and we will immediately send home anyone with an elevated temperature (100.2 F and above).
- We have limited the numbers of staff providing care to facilitate social distancing within the office and among team members
- We have created a specific checklist of recommendation for our team to follow so that they arrive to work healthy and go home to their families without worry.



2) Recommendations for Our Team

Before coming to work

- Take temperature (do not go to work if you or any other family member are experiencing symptoms; cough, sore throat, fever...etc.)
- Remove watch and rings and leave at home
- Tie hair up, keep nails short
- Avoid extra accessories
- Place phone in a Ziplock bag that you will discard at the end of the day
- If bringing a lunch, place in disposable wrapping

At work

- Change into scrubs, coveralls and work shoes (preferably plastic and wipeable) on arrival
- Use PPE as appropriate
- Leave all clutter (pens, phones, etc.) outside of patient op rooms
- Wash hands and arms with soap
- Remove scrubs and place in washable bag and leave at work
- Wash hands and put clean clothes on and Sanitize phone, glasses, etc.
- Work clothes will be remaining at the office to be laundered on site with detergent and hot water. Work clothes will not be taken home and is not to be laundered with regular everyday clothing.
- No cell phone use at work

At Home

- Remove shoes and Shower immediately before touching anything or anyone



3) Patient Interviews and Social Distancing

Before patient arrival every effort is made to

- Screen patients during phone calls when scheduling appointments for care using established and recommended screening checklists and scripts to recognize potential carriers
- Reschedule patients who show any signs of a cough or fever or who describe having any of known the warning signs, loss of smell, taste, body ache, sore throat,
- Instruct patients to call ahead and reschedule their appointment if they develop symptoms of a respiratory infection (e.g., cough, sore throat, or fever)

To promote social distancing

- Prioritize high risk patients (immune compromised, over 60 y.o. etc.) with early morning appointments to minimize contact with others
- When booking patients, we are spreading out the schedule so there are less people in the waiting room (A maximum of two people at a time)
- If a patient is being accompanied, their escort should wait in the car to limit number of people in the waiting room and to promote social distancing
- Utilizing a “virtual” waiting room: patients can wait in their car or outside the office where they can be contacted by mobile phone when it is their time to be treated.

Safety measures taken upon arrival

- Limit points of entry to the clinic.
- Post visual alerts (e.g., signs, posters) at the entrance door advising patients of the COVID-19 risk and advising them not to enter the facility when ill.
- Masks and tissues are made accessible immediately upon entry. We ask you to dispose of tissues and contaminated items in waste receptacles.

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- Provide supplies such as alcohol-based hand rub (ABHR) with 60-95% alcohol, tissue, and no-touch receptacles for disposal, at the entrance, in waiting rooms and at front desk.
 - Post photos at the entrance and in waiting room to provide patients and HCP (Health Care Personnel) with instruction on respiratory hygiene, and cough etiquette.
 - Patients are Immediately escorted to a hand washing station
 - Asked to rinse with 1% hydrogen peroxide before each appointment
 - Asked about the presence of symptoms of a respiratory infection and history of travel or contact with possible COVID-19 patients.
 - Take temperature with a non-contact digital infrared forehead thermometer to assess fever
 - If fever temperature of 100.2 degrees F or higher or respiratory symptoms are present, they will be advised to seek medical treatment and their visit will be rescheduled.
 - As testing for the virus becomes more available, we will be incorporating this added benefit to screen patients.

4) Measures Taken Upon Patient Entry to the Clinic

- If an examination room is not readily available, ensure social distancing in the waiting room by placing seating a minimum of 6 feet apart.
- We have covered our furniture with disposable covers which will be replaced after each patient and we have also removed all magazines.
- Frequent wipe down of waiting rooms, bathrooms, door handles, tables, light switches, computers...etc.



5) Reception Room and Front Desk Safety Measures

- Place hospital-grade air-purifying systems (with appropriate filtration, UV-LIGHT air sterilization and ion exchange technology at proper rate, etc.) to remove pathogens to smallest particle size of 0.3 micron and return clean and scrubbed air.
- In addition to the portable air-purifier, we have installed a centralized air purifier/ scrubber to clean and disinfect the air in the clinic.

6) Protocols of the Clinical Team

- We adhere to usual standard and transmission-based precautions in operatory but with greater attention to detail and ensure that procedures are followed consistently and correctly.
- Correct Hand Hygiene is performed by our staff before and after all patient contact, contact with potentially infectious material, and before putting on and after removing personal protective equipment (PPE).

Personal Protective Equipment

- Wear PPE (masks, gloves, cap, eye protection, face shields, gowns, N95 masks when performing Aerosol Generating Procedures , AGP)
- Masks are for one-time use; are discarded and replaced after each patient
- N95 respirators are used instead of a facemask when performing an aerosol-generating procedure (AGP)

Eye Protection

- Put on eye protection (i.e., goggles or disposable face shields that cover eyes and sides of the face) upon entry to the patient room or care area.
- Remove eye protection before leaving the patient room or care area.

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- Reusable eye protection (e.g., goggles) will be cleaned and disinfected according to manufacturer reprocessing instructions prior to re-use.
Disposable eye protection should be discarded after use.

Gloves

- Clean gloves upon entry into the patient room or care area.
- Gloves will be removed and discarded when leaving the patient room or care area, to be followed by hand hygiene, immediately.

Gowns

- Put on clean isolation gown upon entry into the patient room
- Change gowns between patients, remove and discard them in dedicated containers for waste. New gowns are prioritized for aerosol-generating procedures and procedures where water splash and sprays are anticipated.
- Non-disposable gowns are all disinfected with UV -light sterilization unit
- Disposable Shoe Covers will also be worn over regular shoes throughout the day and will be disposed prior to leaving the clinic.

7) Patients in the Operatory

- Health care personnel (HCP) should strictly follow basic infection control practices between patients (e.g., hand hygiene, cleaning and disinfecting shared equipment).
- Limit transport and movement of the patient outside of the room
- Consider placing x-ray equipment in patient operatories to reduce the need for patient transport.
- Once the patient has left the operatory, HCP refrain from entering the op until sufficient time has elapsed to remove potentially infectious particles and for room to be cleaned with UV- LIGHT
- Patients undergoing aerosol-generating procedures are in a separate operatories.
- To further minimize chances of cross contamination through backflow, water used in each dental unit is changed after **EACH** patient. We have always used water treated through our 5 -stage reverse-osmosis filter for our patients and dental units,
- **We have purchased a special extraoral suction unit to be placed above patients receiving AGP treatment and the equipment source to facilitate maximum evacuation of aerosols.**



8) Protocols After the Clinical Treatment

- All non-disposable medical equipment used for patient care should be cleaned and disinfected according to manufacturer's instructions.
- Ensure that environmental cleaning and disinfection procedures are followed consistently and correctly. Routine cleaning and disinfection procedures (e.g., using cleaners and water to pre-clean surfaces prior to applying an EPA-registered, hospital-grade disinfectant to frequently touched surfaces or objects for appropriate contact times as indicated on the product's label) are appropriate for SARS-CoV-2 in healthcare settings, including those patient-care areas in which aerosol-generating procedures are performed.
- We are purchasing a mobile, self-contained germicidal cleaning device that uses proven ultraviolet emitting radiation technology to help reduce and eliminate bacteria, viruses and other pathogens on environmental surfaces and is approved by the FDA.

9) Safety Measures After the Visit

- Encourage payment by credit card over the phone to encourage social distancing with front desk
- Review of estimates and insurance forms can be carried out via phone call or via email
- Patients wash hands before leaving

At the End of the Day

- A special cleaning crew has been hired to clean and disinfect the office from top to bottom in preparation for the following day

We are confident that these guidelines will help to create a safe environment for all of our patients and team members and hope you can feel secure in the knowledge that we are doing everything in our power to provide the safest clinical conditions in order to protect our patients, our team and our families.