



A Guide to Dental Visits After COVID-19 Outbreak

A healthy mouth is essential to good overall health and wellbeing. On May 4th, dental offices in Missouri began to open once again for non-emergency dental care. The [American Dental Association](#), [American Dental Hygienists' Association](#), [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#), [Occupational Safety and Health Administration](#), [Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services](#), and [Missouri Dental Association](#) recently released guidelines and recommendations to keep patients and staff safe. As you make plans to return to your dentist, Missouri Coalition for Oral Health wants to be sure you have the latest information on changes you may see.

Prior to your appointment:

- You may receive a letter from your dentist reaffirming their commitment to safety and infection control and informing you of any changes in their protocol.
- To better allow for social distancing between patients, there may be fewer appointment time options.
- You may be asked additional screening questions when you make your appointment as well as when you arrive to the office.
- The dental office may take your temperature upon coming into the building.
- Waiting rooms may no longer have items such as kids' toys and magazines as they are difficult to clean and disinfect.
- You may be asked to wait in your car until it is time for your appointment.

During your appointment:

- Handshakes and other touching not necessary for treatment should be avoided.
- If possible, only the patient will be allowed in the treatment room.
- Everyone in the treatment room will be wearing a mask.
- Treatment may be modified to reduce the amount of aerosol produced.

After your appointment:

- You may be asked to report any signs or symptoms of COVID-19 within 14 days following your appointment.

Staff protection:

- Front desk staff may be wearing masks and/or talking with you through a clear barrier.
- Staff may be wearing protective equipment such as face shields, cloth or disposable gowns, and foot and head coverings.

If you have any questions about whether your dental office is safe to visit, please call your dentist.

This list is not intended to be comprehensive, and it is subject to change. Your dentist will clarify their new protocols to keep both you and the dental team safe. They look forward to working with you to ensure you are able to maintain optimum oral health!