

What to Expect as Dental Offices Reopen

On May 4th Missouri Dental Offices reopened for non-emergency care. This does not require any dental office to reopen and dental offices are encouraged to open only after ensuring they can meet the safety requirements mandated before scheduling non-emergency patients.

Good oral health is essential to good overall health and wellbeing, and we know that individuals across the state are eager to return to their dental offices for non-emergency care. As dental offices begin reopening and you make plans to go see your dentist, keep in mind there are a number of changes you may see.

Prior to Your Appointment



- You may receive communication from your dental office about their commitment to safety and the changes they are implementing as they reopen.
- You may be asked screening questions when setting up an appointment.
- There may be fewer appointment times available to allow for proper cleaning and disinfecting between patients and social distancing within the office.
- You may be asked to schedule a teledentistry appointment rather than an in-person appointment.

When You Arrive at the Office



- You may be asked to stay outside, in your car if possible, and call the office for further instructions.
- You may be screened again prior to being seen, which may include taking your temperature.
- You may be asked to enter the office alone and leave all visitors outside the office to wait.
- You may be asked to wear your own face mask when entering the office.

During Your Visit



- You may be asked to wash your hands and/or rinse your mouth upon entering the dental office.
- You may see the dental team wearing more protective gear than usual, including gloves, masks, gowns, goggles, face shields, foot and head coverings.
- Your treatment may be modified to reduce aerosol production – this means a routine cleaning could be a little different than normal.
- Any unnecessary contact such as handshakes should be avoided.
- Ask the dental team questions if you see something you want more information about or don't understand.

Changes Inside the Dental Office



- You may see signs inside the office explaining changes made.
- You may see additional sanitation and disinfection measures used in the office.
- You may see fewer people in the office than usual to ensure social distancing guidelines are met.
- You may see new features in the office to ensure staff and patient safety, such as a clear barrier at the check-in/out area.

After Your Appointment



- Your dental office may do a follow-up screening a few days after your appointment.

It is important to remember that each dental office has their own mission and each dental office will look differently as they begin to reopen. The changes implemented in dental offices throughout Missouri will be based on the professional judgement of the dentist and dental team in each office. If you have questions about the changes and procedures listed above, please contact your dental office.

This list is not intended to be comprehensive and it is subject to change as more information and guidance becomes available.

Missouri Coalition
for Oral Health