

ADHA Interim Guidance on Returning to Work

In order to protect the dental hygienist, the dental team and patients, the American Dental Hygienists' Association (ADHA) continues to support the recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) that **balance the need to provide necessary services while minimizing risk to patients and dental healthcare personnel (DHCP). Consider if elective procedures, surgeries, and non-urgent outpatient visits should be postponed in certain circumstances.** Provide dental treatment only after you have assessed the patient and considered both the risk to the patient of deferring care and the risk to DHCP and patients of healthcare-associated SARS-CoV-2 transmission.

ADHA has developed this document to provide ongoing interim guidance to dental hygienists on returning to work. Information from the CDC's Guidance for Dental Settings is included throughout the document and appears in an orange box.

As licensed health care providers, dental hygienists have a responsibility to uphold the highest standards of clinical practice to ensure the health and safety of the individuals they serve and the team members with whom they interact.

The following considerations have been prepared utilizing guidelines, regulations and resources from key resources including, but not limited to, CDC, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), the American Dental Association (ADA) and the Organization for Safety, Asepsis and Prevention (OSAP).

ADHA recommends that all dental hygienists follow the [Standards for Clinical Dental Hygiene Practice](#), which state that dental hygienists "follow the most current guidelines to reduce the risks of health-care-associated infections in patients and illnesses and injuries in health care personnel."

It is also recommended that all dental hygienists review the [ADHA Code of Ethics](#) and verify that their individual malpractice insurance is current prior to returning to work.

Dental Healthcare Personnel (DHCP) should stay informed and regularly consult with the [state or local health department](#) for region-specific information and recommendations. [Monitor trends](#) in local case counts and deaths, especially for populations at higher risk for severe illness.

Consult with local public health authority and state officials to determine COVID-19 prevalence and risk level. If there is a surge in incidence of COVID-19, **consider providing emergency services only.**

A Readiness to Return to Work Checklist is provided at the end of this document to help you determine if it is appropriate for you to return to work. Professional judgment should be exercised.

Prior to Opening

Prior to returning to work, all dental team members should be tested for COVID-19, where feasible, subject to state and local regulations. Individuals who test positive or present with symptoms should **not** report to work and should follow quarantine protocols.

If you are unable to acquire appropriate supplies to manage infection control, **prioritize the most emergent cases.**

If there is a surge in incidence of COVID-19, **consider providing emergency services only.** Continually monitor risk level incidence, as there may be times when it will be important to cease nonessential procedures if there is a surge in COVID-19 incidence.

Consider a soft opening in which all dental team members practice new routines and procedures. Repeated practice leads to understanding and adoption.

Communication within the Dental Team

Meet with your employer and the entire dental team to have an open conversation about:

- Current supply of PPE and new supplies needed
- Screening practice for COVID-19
- Methods to reduce/eliminate aerosol production in the office
- Strategies for social distancing among patients and the dental team
- Scheduling changes for providers to allow for appropriate disinfecting between patients

Share resources to ensure that best practice decisions are made to support the health and safety of the entire team and the patients you serve. The latest CDC [Interim Infection Prevention and Control Guidance for Dental Settings During the COVID-19 Response](#) can assist you.

Identify one team member who will regularly monitor national resources and update the entire dental team on key recommendations that will impact practice, including ADHA's [COVID-19 Resource Center](#).

Conduct an inventory of PPE and other infection-control supplies.

Equipment Recommendations

- After a period of non-use, dental equipment may require maintenance and/or repair. Review the manufacturer's instructions for use (IFU) for office closure, period of non-use, and reopening for all equipment and devices. Some considerations include:
 - Dental unit waterlines (DUWL):
 - Test water quality to ensure it meets standards for safe drinking water as established by the Environmental Protection Agency (< 500 CFU/mL) prior to expanding dental care practices.
 - Confer with the manufacturer regarding recommendations for need to shock DUWL of any devices and products that deliver water used for dental procedures.
 - Continue standard maintenance and monitoring of DUWL according to the IFUs of the dental operatory unit and the DUWL treatment products.
 - Autoclaves and instrument cleaning equipment
 - Ensure that all routine cleaning and maintenance has been performed according to the schedule recommended per manufacturer's IFU.
 - Test sterilizers using a biological indicator with a matching control (i.e., biological indicator and control from same lot number) after a period of non-use prior to reopening per manufacturer's IFU.
 - Air compressor, vacuum and suction lines, radiography equipment, high-tech equipment, amalgam separators, and other dental equipment: Follow protocol for storage and recommended maintenance per manufacturer IFU.
 - For additional guidance on reopening buildings, see CDC's [Guidance for Reopening Buildings After Prolonged Shutdown or Reduced Operation](#).

Work Environment



The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) issued an "emergency temporary standard" (ETS). The ETS follows an executive order signed by President Joe Biden in January 2021 directing OSHA to consider a rule that would require employers to take steps to protect workers from contracting COVID-19 while on the job. This ETS focuses exclusively on the health-care industry.

The ETS does NOT apply to "non-hospital ambulatory care settings [i.e. dental settings] where all non-employees are screened prior to entry and people with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 are not permitted to enter those settings."

While the ETS may not apply to many settings where dental healthcare personnel work, it does include important information that can be implemented in any health care setting, including dental settings:

- Develop and implement effective COVID-19 plans. Controlling COVID-19 requires employers to use multiple overlapping controls in a layered approach to better protect workers.
- Have a designated safety coordinator with authority to ensure compliance, a workplace-specific hazard assessment, involvement of non-managerial employees in hazard assessment and plan development/implementation, and policies and procedures to minimize the risk of transmission of COVID-19 to employees.
- Limit and monitor points of entry to settings where direct patient care is provided; screen and triage patients, clients, and other visitors and non-employees; implement patient management strategies.
- Develop and implement policies and procedures to adhere to Standard and Transmission-Based precautions based on CDC guidelines.
- Provide and ensure each employee wears a facemask when indoors and when occupying a vehicle with other people for work purposes; provide and ensure employees use respirators and other PPE for exposure to people with suspected or confirmed COVID-19, and for aerosol-generating procedures on a person with suspected or confirmed COVID-19.
 - Employees should change facemasks at least once per day, whenever they are soiled or damaged, and more frequently as necessary (e.g., patient care reasons)

Resources:

- [ETS Regulatory Text \(29 CFR 1910, Subpart U\)](#)
- [Fact Sheet: Subpart U—COVID-19 Healthcare ETS](#)
- [Is your workplace covered by the COVID-19 Healthcare ETS?](#)
- [Frequently Asked Questions](#)

Care of Dental Health Care Personnel

[All healthcare personnel are recommended to get vaccinated against COVID-19.](#)

No team members should come to work if sick or having cold, flu or COVID-19 symptoms.

Monitor and Manage Dental Health Care Personnel

- Implement sick leave policies for DHCP that are flexible, non-punitive, and consistent with public health guidance.
- As part of routine practice, DHCP should be asked to regularly monitor themselves for fever and symptoms consistent with COVID-19.
 - DHCP should be reminded to stay home when they are ill and should receive no penalties when needing to stay home when ill or under quarantine.
 - If DHCP develop fever ($T \geq 100.0^{\circ}\text{F}$) or [symptoms consistent with COVID-19](#) while at work, they should keep their cloth face covering or facemask on, inform their supervisor, and leave the workplace.
- Screen all DHCP at the beginning of their shift for fever and symptoms consistent with COVID-19.
 - Actively measure their temperature and document absence of symptoms consistent with COVID-19.
 - Clinical judgement should be used to guide testing of individuals in such situations.
 - Medical evaluation may be warranted for lower temperatures ($< 100.0^{\circ}\text{F}$) or other symptoms based on assessment by occupational health personnel. Additional information about clinical presentation of patients with COVID-19 is [available](#).
- If DHCP suspect they have COVID-19:
 - Do not come to work.
 - If DHCP are ill at work, have them keep their cloth face covering or facemask on and leave the workplace.
 - Notify their primary healthcare provider to determine whether medical evaluation is necessary.
- For information on work restrictions for health care personnel with underlying health conditions who may care for COVID-19 patients, see CDC's [FAQ](#).

Dental Health Care Personnel Potential Work Exposure to COVID-19

- If DHCP experience a potential work exposure to COVID-19, follow CDC's [Interim U.S. Guidance for Risk Assessment and Work Restrictions for Healthcare Personnel with Potential Exposure to COVID-19](#).
 - Information on testing DHCP for SARS-CoV-2 is available in the [Interim Guidance on Testing Healthcare Personnel for SARS-CoV-2](#).
- If patients or DHCP believe they have experienced an exposure to COVID-19 outside of the dental healthcare setting, including during domestic travel, they should follow CDC's [Public Health Guidance for Community-Related Exposure](#). Separate guidance is available for international travelers.

Hygiene

- Take steps to ensure patients and staff adhere to respiratory hygiene and cough etiquette, as well as hand hygiene, and all patients follow triage procedures throughout the duration of the visit.
 - Post [visual alerts](#) (e.g., signs, posters) at the entrance and in strategic places (e.g., waiting areas, elevators, break rooms) to provide instructions (in appropriate languages) about hand hygiene and respiratory hygiene and cough etiquette. Instructions should include wearing a cloth face covering or facemask for source control, and how and when to perform hand hygiene.
 - Provide supplies for respiratory hygiene and cough etiquette, including alcohol-based hand rub (ABHR) with at least 60% alcohol, tissues, and no-touch receptacles for disposal, at healthcare facility entrances, waiting rooms, and patient check-ins.
 - Install physical barriers (e.g., glass or plastic windows) at reception areas to limit close contact between triage personnel and potentially infectious patients.
- Place chairs in the waiting room at least six feet apart.
- Remove toys, magazines, and other frequently touched objects from waiting room that cannot be regularly cleaned and disinfected.
- Minimize the number of persons waiting in the waiting room.
 - Patients may opt to wait in a personal vehicle or outside the dental facility where they can be contacted by mobile phone when it is their turn for dental care.
 - Minimize overlapping dental appointments.

Office Protocols

- DHCP should limit clinical care to one patient at a time whenever possible.
- Set up operatories so that only the clean or sterile supplies and instruments needed for the dental procedure are readily accessible. All other supplies and instruments should be in covered storage, such as drawers and cabinets, and away from potential contamination. Any supplies and equipment that are exposed but not used during the procedure should be considered contaminated and should be disposed of or reprocessed properly after completion of the procedure.
- Patient placement
 - Ideally, dental treatment should be provided in individual patient rooms whenever possible.
 - For dental facilities with open floor plans, to prevent the spread of pathogens there should be:
 - At least 6 feet of space between patient chairs.

- Physical barriers between patient chairs. Easy-to-clean floor-to-ceiling barriers will enhance effectiveness of portable HEPA air filtration systems (check to make sure extending barriers to ceiling will not interfere with fire sprinkler systems).
 - Operatories should be oriented parallel to the direction of airflow if possible.
 - Where feasible, consider patient orientation carefully, placing the patient's head near the return air vents, away from pedestrian corridors, and towards the rear wall when using vestibule-type office layouts.
- Maintain six-foot social distancing at work with other team members and patients when not performing treatment.

- Patient volume
 - Determine the maximum number of patients who can safely receive care at the same time in the dental facility, based on the number of rooms, the layout of the facility, and the time needed to clean and disinfect patient operatories.

Patient Preparation

Patient Management

- Contact all patients prior to dental treatment.
 - [Telephone screen*](#) all patients for [symptoms consistent with COVID-19](#). If the patient reports symptoms of COVID-19, avoid non-emergent dental care. If possible, delay dental care until the [patient has recovered](#).
 - Assess the patient's dental condition and determine whether the patient needs to be seen in the dental setting. Use teledentistry options as alternatives to in-office care.
 - Request that the patient limit the number of visitors accompanying the patient to the dental appointment to only those people who are necessary.
 - Advise patients that they, and anyone accompanying them to the appointment, will be requested to wear a face covering when entering the facility and will undergo screening for fever and symptoms consistent with COVID-19.
- Systematically assess all patients and visitors upon arrival.
 - Ensure that the patient and visitors have donned their own face covering, or provide a surgical mask if supplies are adequate.
 - Screen everyone entering the dental healthcare facility for fever and [symptoms consistent with COVID-19 or exposure to others with SARS-CoV-2 infection](#).
 - Ask them if they have been advised to self-quarantine because of exposure to someone with SARS-CoV-2 infection.

- Document absence of symptoms consistent with COVID-19.
- Actively take the patient's temperature. Fever is either measured temperature $\geq 100.0^{\circ}\text{F}$ or subjective fever.
- Ask patient to re-don their face covering at the completion of their clinical dental care when they leave the treatment area.
- Even when DHCP screen patients for respiratory infections, inadvertent treatment of a dental patient who is later confirmed to have COVID-19 may occur. To address this, DHCP should request that the patient inform the dental clinic if they develop symptoms or are diagnosed with COVID-19 within 2 days following the dental appointment.*

Pre-screening of patients, using teledentistry, will reduce the number of in-office patients, as well as post-treatment follow-up appointments.

If forms need to be completed and signed, provide pens to the patients, and instruct them to keep the pens for their personal use.

*or teledentistry screen. Note: ADHA has added this amendment to the CDC guidance.

**Note: ADHA recommends the dental hygienist follow up with the patient 2 days post-appointment to ask if they have developed symptoms or have been diagnosed with COVID-19.

Special Considerations for Providing Dental Hygiene Care



OSHA has defined aerosol-generating procedures as "a medical procedure that generates aerosols that can be infectious and are of respirable size. For the purposes of this section, only the following medical procedures are considered aerosol-generating procedures: open suctioning of airways; sputum induction; cardiopulmonary resuscitation; endotracheal intubation and extubation; non-invasive ventilation (e.g., BiPAP, CPAP); bronchoscopy; manual ventilation; medical/surgical/postmortem procedures using oscillating bone saws; and dental procedures involving: ultrasonic scalers; high-speed dental handpieces; air/water syringes; air polishing; and air abrasion".

- **Avoid aerosol-generating procedures whenever possible.**
- **Avoid aerosol generating procedures whenever possible, including the use of high-speed dental handpieces, air/water syringe, and ultrasonic scalers. Prioritize minimally invasive/atraumatic restorative techniques (hand instruments only). If aerosol-generating procedures are necessary for dental care, use four-handed dentistry, high evacuation suction and dental dams to minimize droplet spatter and aerosols. The number of DHCP present during the procedure should be limited to only those essential for patient care and procedure support.**
- If emergency dental care is medically necessary for a patient who has, or is suspected of having, COVID-19, DHCP should follow CDC's [Interim Infection Prevention and Control Recommendations for Patients with Suspected or Confirmed Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\) in Healthcare Settings](#).

- Dental treatment should be provided in an individual patient room with a closed door.
- Avoid aerosol-generating procedures (e.g., use of dental handpieces, air/water syringe, ultrasonic scalers) if possible.
- If aerosol-generating procedures must be performed:
 - DHCP in the room should wear an N95 or higher-level respirator, such as disposable filtering facepiece respirator, powered air-purifying respirator (PAPR), or elastomeric respirator, as well as eye protection (goggles or a full-face shield), gloves, and a gown.
 - The number of DHCP present during the procedure should be limited to only those essential for patient care and procedure support. Visitors should not be present for the procedure.
 - Aerosol-generating procedures should ideally take place in an airborne infection isolation room.
- Consider scheduling the patient at the end of the day.
- Do not schedule any other patients at that time.
- High-volume evacuators (HVE) should be available in dental hygiene rooms, and a dental hygiene assistant should be available during procedures that require HVE. The room should be properly sanitized after all procedures.
 - Use full-mouth rubber dams for placement of dental sealants and during dental therapy restorative treatment.
- Backflow can occur when using a saliva ejector; therefore, when possible, use four-handed technique and HVE for controlling aerosols and splatter.
- Use hand instrumentation versus ultrasonic instruments for periodontal debridement and scaling procedures.
- Use selective plaque and stain removal versus full-mouth coronal motor polishing with a slow speed hand piece.
- Avoid air-polishing procedures.
- Do not use the air and water functions on the syringe, together, at the same time.

Preprocedural Mouth Rinse

- There is no published evidence regarding the clinical effectiveness of Preprocedural Mouth Rinse (PPMR) to reduce SARS-CoV-2 viral loads or to prevent transmission. Although COVID-19 was not studied, PPMRs with an antimicrobial product (chlorhexidine gluconate, essential oils, povidone-iodine or cetylpyridinium chloride) may reduce the level of oral microorganisms in aerosols and spatter generated during dental procedures.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

For DHCP working in facilities located in areas with no to minimal community transmission

- DHCP should continue to adhere to Standard Precautions (and Transmission-Based Precautions, if required based on the suspected diagnosis).
- DHCP should wear a surgical mask, eye protection (goggles or a face shield that covers the front and sides of the face), a gown or protective clothing, and gloves during procedures likely to generate splashing or spattering of blood or other body fluids. Protective eyewear (e.g., safety glasses, trauma glasses) with gaps between glasses and the face likely do not protect eyes from all splashes and sprays.

For DHCP working in facilities located in areas with moderate to substantial community transmission

- DHCP working in facilities located in areas with moderate to substantial community transmission are more likely to encounter asymptomatic or pre-symptomatic patients with SARS-CoV-2 infection. If SARS-CoV-2 infection is not suspected in a patient presenting for care (based on symptom and exposure history), DHCP should follow Standard Precautions (and Transmission-Based Precautions, if required based on the suspected diagnosis).
- DHCP should implement the use of universal eye protection and wear eye protection in addition to their surgical mask to ensure the eyes, nose, and mouth are all protected from exposure to respiratory secretions during patient care encounters, including those where splashes and sprays are not anticipated.
- During aerosol generating procedures DHCP should use an N95 respirator or a respirator that offers an equivalent or higher level of protection such as other disposable filtering facepiece respirators, powered air-purifying respirators (PAPRs), or elastomeric respirators.
 - Respirators should be used in the context of a comprehensive respiratory protection program, which includes medical evaluations, fit testing and training in accordance with the [Occupational Safety and Health Administration's \(OSHA\) Respiratory Protection standard \(29 CFR 1910.134\)](#).
 - Respirators with exhalation valves are not recommended for source control and should not be used during surgical procedures as unfiltered exhaled breath may compromise the sterile field. If only a respirator with an exhalation valve is available and source control is needed, the exhalation valve should be covered with a facemask that does not interfere with the respirator fit.

PPE Considerations for Extended Use

CDC has developed a series of strategies or options to optimize supplies of PPE in healthcare settings when there is limited supply, and a burn rate calculator that provides information for healthcare facilities to plan and optimize the use of PPE for response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Optimization strategies are provided for gloves, gowns, facemasks, eye protection, and respirators.

These policies are only intended to remain in effect during times of shortages during the COVID-19 pandemic. DHCP should review this guidance carefully, as it is based on a set of tiered recommendations. Strategies should be implemented sequentially. Decisions by facilities to move to contingency and crisis capacity strategies are based on the following assumptions:

- Facilities understand their current PPE inventory and supply chain;
- Facilities understand their PPE utilization rate;
- Facilities are in communication with local healthcare coalitions and federal, state, and local public health partners (e.g., public health emergency preparedness and response staff) regarding identification of additional supplies;
- Facilities have already implemented engineering and administrative control measures;
- Facilities have provided DHCP with required education and training, including having them demonstrate competency with donning and doffing, with any PPE ensemble that is used to perform job responsibilities, such as provision of patient care.

For example, extended use of facemasks and respirators should only be undertaken when the facility is at contingency or crisis capacity and has reasonably implemented all applicable administrative and engineering controls. Such controls include selectively canceling elective and non-urgent procedures and appointments for which PPE is typically used by DHCP. Extended use of PPE is not intended to encourage dental facilities to practice at a normal patient volume during a PPE shortage, but only to be implemented in the short term when other controls have been exhausted. Once the supply of PPE has increased, facilities should return to conventional strategies.

Respirators that comply with international standards may be considered during times of known shortages. CDC has guidance entitled [Factors to Consider When Planning to Purchase Respirators from Another Country](#).

Respirators

The following best practice recommendations are advised using these key terms:

- Critical tasks – all functions that occur during clinical treatment
- Non-critical tasks – procedures such as cleaning the operatory, sterilizing instruments, bringing supplies to/from the operatory

Best practice for respiratory protection involves the use of N95 respirators custom-fitted for critical tasks; training on fit and seal should be provided prior to use. Other masks may be used for non-critical tasks. Remove the respirator after every patient.

Fit-test kits are available commercially. Carefully follow manufacturer instructions.
Respiratory fit testing

- can be done by employer or outside party,
- should be done annually thereafter, and
- uses an agent to check whether there is leakage around the respirator.

Surgical masks are to be discarded after exiting the patient's room or care area and closing the door (if present). Take into consideration that most dental procedures generate droplets, spatter and aerosols:

- Remove and discard disposable respirators and surgical masks.
- Perform hand hygiene after removing the respirator or face mask.

Resources:

[CDC Illustration of COVID-19 PPE for Health Care Personnel](#)

[Hospital Respiratory Protection Program Toolkit](#): Though designed for hospitals, the information in this resource from the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) can be customized for your practice.

Donning and Doffing PPE

There are multiple [sequences recommended for donning and doffing PPE](#).

One suggested sequence for DHCP includes:

- Before entering a patient room or care area:
 1. Perform hand hygiene.
 2. Put on a clean gown or protective clothing that covers personal clothing and skin (e.g., forearms) likely to be soiled with blood, saliva, or other potentially infectious materials.
 - Gowns and protective clothing should be changed if they become soiled.
 3. Put on a surgical mask or respirator.
 - Mask ties should be secured on the crown of the head (top tie) and the base of the neck (bottom tie). If mask has loops, hook them appropriately around your ears.
 - Respirator straps should be placed on the crown of the head (top strap) and the base of the neck (bottom strap). Perform a user seal check each time you put on the respirator.

4. Put on eye protection (goggles or a face shield that covers the front and sides of the face).
 - Protective eyewear (e.g., safety glasses, trauma glasses) with gaps between glasses and the face likely do not protect eyes from all splashes and sprays.
 - Personal eyeglasses and contact lenses are NOT considered adequate eye protection.
5. Perform hand hygiene.
6. Put on clean non-sterile gloves.
 - Gloves should be changed if they become torn or heavily contaminated.
7. Enter the patient room.
- After completion of dental care:
 1. Remove gloves.
 2. Remove gown or protective clothing and discard the gown in a dedicated container for waste or linen.
 - Discard disposable gowns after each use.
 - [Launder](#) cloth gowns or protective clothing after each use.
 3. Exit the patient room or care area.
 4. Perform hand hygiene.
 5. Remove eye protection
 - Carefully remove eye protection by grabbing the strap and pulling upwards and away from head. Do not touch the front of the eye protection.
 - Clean and disinfect reusable eye protection according to manufacturer's reprocessing instructions prior to reuse.
 - Discard disposable eye protection after use.
 6. Remove and discard surgical mask or respirator.
 - Do not touch the front of the respirator or mask.
 - Surgical mask: Carefully untie the mask (or unhook from the ears) and pull it away from the face without touching the front.
 - Respirator: Remove the bottom strap by touching only the strap and bring it carefully over the head. Grasp the top strap and bring it carefully over the head, and then pull the respirator away from the face without touching the front of the respirator.
 7. Perform hand hygiene.

- Team members should leave their shoes at the office, and footwear should be disinfected daily.

Disinfection

Appropriate PPE should be worn for all activities involving potential exposure to patient body fluids, contaminated surfaces and equipment, and hazardous chemicals (e.g. disinfectants).

Puncture resistant/utility gloves, masks, eye protection and gowns should be worn while handling contaminated instruments.

Patients should be scheduled in a manner that allows for complete disinfection of operatories.

If possible, decide upon two rooms for each dental hygienist to use, so that one room can be sanitized and prepared while the dental hygienist begins using the next room for another patient.

If there is only one room dedicated for dental hygiene care, it is recommended to increase patient appointment time, e.g., 1.5 hours per appointment for appropriate disinfection and room preparation. Do not double-book appointments.

If there is no door for the operatory, consider using a plastic barrier to seal the room. This barrier will need to be disinfected between patients.

Barriers should be used when possible, especially for hard-to-clean surfaces (e.g. light switches, computer, mouse, dental unit) and changed between patients.

- DHCP should ensure that environmental cleaning and disinfection procedures are followed consistently and correctly after each patient (however, it is not necessary that DHCP should attempt to sterilize a dental operatory between patients).
- Clean and disinfect the room and equipment according to the [Guidelines for Infection Control in Dental Health-Care Settings—2003](#).
- To clean and disinfect the dental operatory after a patient with COVID-19, DHCP should delay entry into the operatory until a [sufficient time has elapsed](#) for enough air changes to remove potentially infectious particles.
- Routine cleaning and disinfection procedures (e.g., using cleaners and water to clean surfaces before applying an Environmental Protection Agency-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.
- Refer to [List N](#) on the EPA website for EPA-registered disinfectants that have qualified under EPA's emerging viral pathogens program for use against SARS-CoV-2.

Doors and knobs need to be wiped down in addition to counters, chairs, cabinets and other surfaces.

Designate clean and dirty areas in the sterilization area. Heat-sterilize all critical and heat tolerant reusable dental and dental hygiene instruments prior to use. Use chemical and biologic monitoring to ensure sterilization is effective. Keep all sterile instruments packaged until ready to be used for patient care. [Guidelines for Infection Control in Dental Health-Care Settings—2003](#)

[OSHA Guidance for Dentistry Workers and Employers](#)

ADHA COVID-19 PATIENT SCREENING QUESTIONNAIRE

*Indicate Yes or No and provide relevant comments.

Patient Name: _____ Date: _____

| Screening Questions | Pre-Appointment* | In-Office* | Post-Appointment* <small>Dental hygienist follows up with the patient 2 days post-appointment to ask if they have developed symptoms or have been diagnosed with COVID-19.</small> |
|--|------------------|------------|---|
| Have you received a COVID-19 vaccine? <small>(This information should be noted in the patient's health record.)</small> | | | |
| Do you have a fever, or have you felt feverish recently? | | | |
| Do you have a cough? | | | |
| Are you having shortness of breath or any difficulty breathing? | | | |
| Do you have chills or repeated shaking with chills? | | | |
| Do you have any muscle pain or body aches? | | | |
| Do you have any recent onset of headache or sore throat? | | | |
| Have you been experiencing nausea and/or vomiting? | | | |
| Do you have any recent loss of taste or smell? | | | |
| Have you been experiencing fatigue recently? | | | |
| Have you experienced any recent GI upset or diarrhea? | | | |
| Have you been advised to self-quarantine because of exposure to someone with COVID-19? | | | |
| Have you traveled in the past 14 days to any regions affected by COVID-19? | | | |
| Have you been tested for COVID-19? If yes, what was the result? | | | |
| Have you been diagnosed with COVID-19? If yes, when? | | | |
| Are you over the age of 65? Do you have: Heart disease Lung disease Kidney disease Diabetes Autoimmune disorders | | | |

DENTAL HYGIENE READINESS TO RETURN TO WORK

After completing chart, use your professional judgment.

| Action | Yes | No |
|--|-----|----|
| Met with coworkers to discuss strategies for opening practice | | |
| Conducted inventory of PPE and sufficient supplies are available to maintain safety of dental team of patients | | |
| All dental team members are tested for COVID-19 and/or exhibit no signs of infection and have not been exposed to COVID-19 | | |
| Community risk level incidence of COVID-19 is low | | |
| Able to maintain social distancing at work | | |
| All operatories and work areas have been disinfected | | |
| Waiting room has been cleaned and all unnecessary objects have been removed | | |
| Hand sanitizers are available for patients as they enter the office | | |
| Contactless thermometer is available to check patient and staff temperatures | | |
| A screening questionnaire is available to screen patients prior to and during appointments | | |
| A designated place is assigned to don and doff PPE | | |
| Appropriate disinfectant has been obtained to clean operatories | | |