

<https://www.ada.org/en/press-room/news-releases/2020-archives/august/american-dental-association-dentistry-is-essential-health-care#.XzWfLD3YTXE.gmail>

## American Dental Association Responds to World Health Organization Recommendation: Dentistry is Essential Health Care

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**CHICAGO, August 12, 2020** —The American Dental Association (ADA) respectfully yet strongly disagrees with the World Health Organization's (WHO) recommendation to delay "routine" dental care in certain situations due to COVID-19.

"Oral health is integral to overall health. [Dentistry is essential health care](#)," states ADA President Chad P. Gehani, D.D.S. "Dentistry is essential health care because of its role in evaluating, diagnosing, preventing or treating oral diseases, which can affect systemic health."

Dr. Gehani added that in March, when COVID-19 cases began to rise in the U.S., the ADA called for dentists to postpone all but urgent and emergency care in order to understand the disease, consider its effect on dental patients, dental professionals and the greater community.

Both the [ADA](#) and the [U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#) then issued interim guidance for dental professionals related to COVID-19. The ADA's guidance calls for the highest level of PPE available—[masks, goggles and face shields](#). The ADA's interim guidance also calls for the use of rubber dams and high velocity suction whenever possible and hand scaling when cleaning teeth rather than using ultrasonic scaling to minimize aerosols.

Dr. Gehani concludes, "Millions of patients have safely visited their dentists in the past few months for the full range of dental services. With appropriate PPE, dental care should continue to be delivered during global pandemics or other disaster situations."

### About the ADA

*The not-for-profit ADA is the nation's largest dental association, representing 163,000 dentist members. The premier source of oral health information, the ADA has advocated for the public's health and promoted the art and science of dentistry since 1859. The ADA's state-of-the-art research facilities develop and test dental products and materials that have advanced the practice of dentistry and made the patient experience more positive. The ADA Seal of Acceptance long has been a valuable and respected guide to consumer dental care products. The monthly *The Journal of the American Dental Association* (JADA) is the ADA's flagship publication and the best-read scientific journal in dentistry. For more information about the ADA, visit [ADA.org](#). For more information on oral health, including prevention, care and treatment of dental disease, visit the ADA's consumer website [MouthHealthy.org](#)*

<https://www.perio.org/periodontal-health-during-COVID-19>

## AMERICAN ACADEMY OF PERIODONTOLOGY STRESSES THE IMPORTANCE OF PERIODONTAL HEALTH DURING COVID-19

**CHICAGO, ILLINOIS** - August 12, 2020 - Despite recent World Health Organization (WHO) recommendations to delay routine dental procedures, the American Academy of Periodontology (AAP) today stressed the importance of maintaining periodontal health during the COVID-19 outbreak. The AAP also announced that its members are committed to implementing rigorous safety measures in an effort to ensure the health and well-being of patients and reduce the risk of exposure during the pandemic.

"It is well-established science that periodontal disease and systemic disease are interconnected," said Dr. Bryan Frantz, President of the AAP. "As a result, establishing and maintaining healthy teeth and gums is fundamental to overall health. The COVID-19 pandemic has certainly affected most aspects of life, but with the right patient safety measures in place that align with state and local guidelines, it should not impact your ability to receive periodontal care."

Periodontal disease, commonly known as gum disease, can cause bleeding gums, bad breath, and if left untreated lead to tooth loss. Periodontal disease has been linked to several other serious conditions including diabetes, heart disease, and Alzheimer's.

The WHO's recent recommendations to delay non-essential dental care cite the risk of disease transmission as a result of the close proximity between dental professionals and patients and due to the aerosols produced by certain dental procedures. However, there is limited evidence to support that dental offices pose an increased risk of spreading disease, including COVID-19.

Additionally, the AAP states that routine visits with a periodontist are crucial to maintaining the health of teeth and gums. "Many patients under the care of a periodontist are undergoing a comprehensive treatment plan," says Dr. Frantz. "Regular check-ups are an important part of this treatment, and any delay in care could lead to a worsening of their periodontal condition."

According to Dr. Frantz, periodontists are uniquely experienced in infection control and other safety measures to protect themselves and their patients from disease exposure. "As dental professionals who are predominantly involved with surgical procedures, periodontists have always been committed to ensuring that effective safety barriers are in place for patients. While the COVID-19 pandemic is still with us, members of the AAP are adhering to COVID-19 mandates issued by state and local agencies and implementing additional measures to ensure the safety of both their patients and their staff."

Additional measures include regular temperature checks for both staff and patients, social distancing, the use of personal protective equipment such as face shields, masks, and gloves, and rigorous infection control and sanitation procedures.

### **About the American Academy of Periodontology:**

The American Academy of Periodontology (AAP) is the leading professional association of periodontists, dentistry's experts in the diagnosis, treatment, and prevention of gum disease and in the placement and maintenance of dental implants. AAP members are dedicated to supporting the optimal oral and overall health and excellent quality of life for their patients through exceptional periodontal care. Periodontists receive three years of additional training following dental school to hone their clinical, surgical, and anatomical skills. Periodontics is one of the twelve recognized specialties of the American Dental Association (ADA).