



Texas Society of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons

Guidelines for Addressing a COVID-19 Encounter in the OMS Office

As Texas oral and maxillofacial surgery offices resume practice, questions have arisen regarding appropriate protocols to follow if a staff member or patient reports that they have been in contact with someone who has COVID-19, or if they themselves have tested positive for the virus.

Following are some guidelines to consider:

Personal Protective Equipment and Social Distancing

Whether or not patients are present, ALL office clinical and business staff should utilize Face Masks and maintain a minimum social distance of 6 feet when working with others in the office space.

Infection Control & Sterilization

All areas of the office, including the business office, front desk and other non-surgical or exam room areas, should follow the infection control guidelines outlined in:

- CDC's [Interim Infection Prevention and Control Recommendations for Patients with Suspected or Confirmed Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\) in Healthcare Settings](#)
- CDC's [Interim Infection Prevention and Control Guidance for Dental Settings During the COVID-19 Response](#).
- [OSHA's Guidance on Preparing Workplaces for COVID-19](#)

Proactively Screen for COVID-19

Take daily temperatures for staff and patients when they enter the practice office. The CDC considers a person to have a fever when they have a measured temperature of at least 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit.

- Ask staff and patients to respond to a brief questionnaire that asks at a minimum:
 - Have you or any member of your household tested positive for COVID-19?
 - Have you or any member of your household been tested for COVID-19 and are awaiting results?
 - Have you or anyone in your household recently lost your sense of smell or taste?
 - Do you or anyone in your household have any GI symptoms (Diarrhea, Nausea)?
 - Even if you don't currently experience these symptoms, have you or anyone in your household any of these symptoms in the last 14 days?
 - Have you or anyone in your household come into contact with a person who has tested positive for COVID-19 within the past 14 days?
 - Have you or anyone in your household travelled by air, bus or train during the last 14 days?

When a Staff Member Exhibits Symptoms or Tests Positive for COVID-19

- If a staff member responds "yes" to any other questions on your daily COVID-19 questionnaire, or if they report feeling ill during the day, send the employee home immediately and ask that they arrange to be tested for COVID-19.

- Surfaces in their workspace should be cleaned and disinfected. Information on persons who had contact with the ill employee during the time the employee had symptoms and 2 days prior to symptoms should be compiled. Others at the facility with close contact within 6 feet of the employee during this time would be considered exposed.

If the employee tests positive for the virus, the CDC Interim [Guidance for Businesses and Employers Responding to Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\), May 2020](#) states that . . .

“in most cases, you do not need to shut down your facility. If it has been less than 7 days since the sick employee has been in the facility, close off any areas used for prolonged periods of time by the sick person:

- Wait 24 hours before cleaning and disinfecting to minimize potential for other employees being exposed to respiratory droplets. If waiting 24 hours is not feasible, wait as long as possible.
- During this waiting period, open outside doors and windows to increase air circulation in these areas.

Follow the CDC [cleaning and disinfection recommendations](#):

Determine which employees may have been exposed to the virus and may need to take additional precautions:

- Inform employees of their possible exposure to COVID-19 in the workplace but maintain confidentiality.
- Most workplaces should follow the [Public Health Recommendations for Community-Related Exposure](#) and instruct potentially exposed employees to stay home for 14 days and self-monitor for symptoms.

When a Staff Member Reports a Contact with a Household Member Who has Tested Positive for COVID-19

If a staff member reports that a member of their family or other close relationship has tested positive for the virus:

- The CDC’s Interim Guidance on [Implementing Safety Practices for Critical Infrastructure Workers Who May Have Had Exposure to a Person with Suspected or Confirmed COVID-19](#) states that:

To ensure continuity of operations of essential functions, CDC advises that critical infrastructure workers may be permitted to continue work following potential exposure to COVID-19, provided they remain asymptomatic and additional precautions are implemented to protect them and the community.

A potential exposure means being a household contact or having close contact within 6 feet of an individual with confirmed or suspected COVID-19. The timeframe for having contact with an individual includes the period of time of 48 hours before the individual became symptomatic.

- In practice, and in the interest of protecting patients and other staff, it may be appropriate to have the affected individual tested for COVID-19 and self-isolate until the result of the test are determined.
- Should the individual test negative for the COVID-19 virus, they must self-isolate from the family or household member who has tested positive for the disease.

Oral and maxillofacial surgery offices across Texas are now opening according to the Governor’s Executive Orders and the rules promulgated by the Texas State Board of Dental Examiners and following the PPE, Infection Control & Sterilizations procedures, Patient and Staff Contact recommendations and other Clinical Procedures as outlined by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Guidelines, the TSOMS’s [Guidelines for Safely Reopening OMS Practices in the Post-COVID-19 Environment](#) and the Texas Dental Association’s [Guidelines for Reopening Dental Offices Safely During the COVID-19 Pandemic](#).

These and other relevant guidelines and other important documents may be found on the [Texas Society website’s COVID-19 page](#), which is routinely updated as new information becomes available.

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