

BC Dentists Issued Relaxed Guidelines for Phase 2 of COVID-19 Response Plan

Vancouver, BC, May 29, 2020: BC Dental Association member dentists and certified dental specialists have been issued guidelines to expand dental services in BC. These are based on the guidelines developed by the BC Centre for Disease Control (BCCDC) [Infection Prevention and Control Guidance for Community-Based Allied Health Care Providers in Clinic Settings](#). The College of Dental Surgeons of BC joined the other oral health care regulatory bodies in publishing joint guidelines, [Transitioning Oral Healthcare to Phase 2 of the COVID-19 Response Plan](#) on May 16.

“The BC guidelines for dentists seem more relaxed because the incidence of COVID-19 is less in BC than in some other jurisdictions like Ontario and Quebec, but they are no less focused on patient and staff safety”, said Dr. Alastair Nicoll, Chair of BCDA’s Back to Work Task Force. “BC Dentists must adhere to physical distancing, hand hygiene, patient screening and other protocols outlined by the BCCDC and WorkSafeBC, but they do not require extensive PPE (such as N95 masks) for every procedure and patient, or extended down time between procedures required by regulators in other provinces. BC is not less safe; the difference is a lower incidence with fewer new cases of COVID-19. The Provincial Health Officer and the BCCDC have determined our level of risk for community transmission, and dictated the appropriate protocols for dental offices”, he added. “Patient, staff and community safety are our top priority.”

Dentists have been highly trained experts in infection control for a long time. As the COVID-19 pandemic evolves, dentists have enhanced their infection control protocols to follow public health orders and regulatory guidelines as they are published. As per the current Phase 2 guidelines, depending on the specific nature of the dental treatment and patient risk factors, members of the dental care team require varying levels of personal protective equipment, (PPE) to keep everyone safe.

Based on the BCCDC guidelines, “*Where there is low incidence and prevalence of COVID-19, additional PPE over and above that required for normal precautions is not required*”. An N95 respirator, eye protection (goggles or face-shield), gloves and gowns are only required for aerosol generating procedures on patients with suspected or confirmed COVID-19.

BC dental patients can expect several changes before and during their dental visit. Patients will be

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asked health screening questions before visiting the dentist, and again upon arrival. It is very important that patients disclose all symptoms and provide an accurate health history to help keep everyone safe.

As we move through Phase 2 of our pandemic response, it is more important than ever that patients and dentists work together to achieve optimal care while reducing the risk of disease transmission. BC's dentists are committed to providing high-quality, safe, and effective oral health care and ask for their patients' cooperation and partnership as we collectively navigate through the pandemic in our province.

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As the voice of dentistry in BC, BCDA is dedicated to serving the interests of its members and promoting oral health for all British Columbians.

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