Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) and Your Oral Health

Staying safe means staying at home. Be sure to make time for healthy activities like exercising, eating well, relaxing, connecting with family and friends on the phone or computer, and maintaining your oral health. These actions keep you and your immune system healthy.

What is COVID-19 and who is at risk?

COVID-19 is a respiratory illness that can spread from person to person. The virus that causes COVID-19 is a novel coronavirus first identified during an investigation in 2019. Everyone exposed to the virus is at risk, but older adults and those with chronic diseases (cardiovascular disease, diabetes, asthma, cancer, and other underlying medical conditions) are at higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19.

Are dental offices included in the Governor’s order for business closures?

No. The Governor’s order is for non-health services, such as restaurants and hair salons. However, on March 17, 2020, dental offices were asked to postpone elective procedures, surgeries and non-urgent visits, but be available for emergencies. Some dental offices have chosen to close; others remain open with limited hours or have staff available by phone.

When can dental offices resume all services?

A date has not yet been determined and will be based on guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the American Dental Association (ADA) and the Illinois Department of Public Health. The availability of personal protective equipment (PPE) and testing, as well as the burden of COVID-19 illness will be key factors in making a decision.

Why is it recommended to postpone routine or elective care?

Many dental procedures produce an aerosol. When this occurs in patients with COVID-19, there is risk of spread to dental office staff and patients. This measure supports recommendations to stay-at-home and conserves masks and other PPE for urgent procedures and front-line health care workers.

What are examples of elective/routine procedures?

Preventive procedures such as dental cleanings for patients without systemic or periodontal disease.

What can I do?

Oral health should be a priority. There is a lot you can do through simple day-to-day habits.

- Brush twice daily for two minutes with a fluoridated toothpaste
- Properly floss and brush/clean your tongue once daily
- Never share a toothbrush
- Change your toothbrush every 3 months or sooner if you are sick
- Drink plenty of fluoridated water
- Limit starchy or sugary foods and drinks
- Resist unhealthy habits to manage stress (smoking, consuming alcohol, biting fingernails)
If your gums bleed while brushing or flossing, continue to brush and floss gently and thoroughly. Often when gum health improves, bleeding decreases. Contact your dentist when COVID-19 restrictions for non-urgent care are lifted.

What should I do if I have dental treatments not completed or care that is in process?

- **For periodontal disease** - make sure that you continue to brush your teeth with fluoridated toothpaste twice a day. The toothbrush should be angled where the teeth and gums meet. Flossing at least one time per day should also be part of your daily routine. You can add a mouth rinse, such as Listerine or CloSYS, to decrease the number of bacteria in your mouth.

- **For untreated dental cavities** - brushing your teeth with fluoridated toothpaste, flossing, and drinking water is helpful. To this routine, adding the use of sugar free or xylitol containing gum, eliminating sugar and carbohydrate snacks can help stop cavities from developing further.

- **For temporary crowns, temporary fillings, and in process root canal treatments** - clean area carefully and avoid chewing gum, chewy/sticky foods and chewing on hard items, such as popcorn or ice chips. It is important to keep your tooth sealed. If you experience any problems, contact your dentist.

What are urgent or emergent needs?

Bleeding, acute pain or infection, and dental trauma are examples. Denture and some orthodontic issues impacting function may also be considered.

**Dental care that should be taken care of by a dentist include:**

- Bleeding that doesn’t stop
- Painful swelling in or around your mouth
- Pain in a tooth, teeth or jawbone
- Gum infection with pain or swelling
- After surgery treatment (dressing change, stitch/suture removal)
- Broken or knocked-out tooth
- Denture adjustment for people receiving radiation or other treatment for cancer
- Snipping or adjusting wire of braces that hurts your cheek or gums
- Biopsy of abnormal tissue

But before you go outside the safety of your home:

A. Contact your regular dentist’s office. They should have a plan to refer you for limited care to address urgent issues.
   1. Communicate your problem by:
      - Telephone
      - FaceTime or Skype
      - Facebook Messenger video chat
      - Google Hangouts video
      - Texting
      - Digital photo sharing
2. Be prepared to answer questions
   - About fever (have a current temperature reading)
   - Dry cough
   - Trouble Breathing

3. Accept that in some cases, definitive care may not be safe to provide
   Your dentist will be able to provide care to alleviate pain, swelling, or other urgent issues. However, current treatment options may be limited as many treatments aerosolize COVID-19.

Is dental care safe during COVID-19?
There are no documented cases of COVID-19 spreading from a dental care provider to a patient, however there is still a lot of missing data. The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) considers dental procedures that generate aerosols a high-risk interaction, due to the prolonged and close contact with saliva, blood, and respiratory secretions.

Dental offices have traditionally had high adherence to infection control procedures using PPE and cleaning surfaces with high level disinfectant. This combination has resulted in a history of safety. Additional PPE and disinfection are required for safe care during this time of COVID-19, including use of N95 mask and other air processing measures.

What is aerosol and how does it relate to COVID-19 and dental care?
- Aerosol is a spray. During some dental care procedures, such as cleanings and fillings, an air-water spray is produced.
- COVID-19 is thought to be transmitted through respiratory droplets. When someone with the infection coughs, sneezes, or speaks, particles or droplets containing the virus may be transmitted to another person or a surface.
- Virus material has been found to exist in saliva, but further research is needed to understand ways to minimize risk.
- Many procedures do not produce an aerosol, such as suture removal, snipping protruding orthodontic wires, examination, X-rays, removal of debris via cotton or brush, simple extractions, and temporary fillings.

How can patients support safety at dental offices?
- Understand your dentist may need extra measures and more time to keep the office safe, including requiring patients and family to wait in cars and not sit in the waiting room.
- More PPE and cleaning may be required, which can result in the need for more time between patients.
- Inform the dental staff if you’ve been sick, been tested for COVID-19, or had recently been quarantined.
- If you have any COVID-19 symptoms, do not go to the dentist. Contact your physician who may suggest you be tested.

Are dental offices testing for COVID-19?
- Knowing the COVID-19 status of patients is important for safe care, so testing measures performed by dentists is a goal for the future. Some dentists may order tests for patients and others could test in the future.
- When point of care testing is available, dental staff may also test themselves.
If you do not have a regular source of dental care, make a contact through one of the sources below. These are searchable by your home ZIP code.

1. “Find a Dentist” for Illinois State Dental Society (ISDS) member dentist directory: [https://www.isds.org/for-the-public/find-a-dentist](https://www.isds.org/for-the-public/find-a-dentist)

2. “Find a Dental Clinic” resource on the ISDS website: [https://www.isds.org/for-the-public/find-a-dental-clinic](https://www.isds.org/for-the-public/find-a-dental-clinic). This is a listing of clinics for people with limited financial ability.

3. Illinois’ Federally Qualified Health Centers: [https://findahealthcenter.hrsa.gov](https://findahealthcenter.hrsa.gov). These centers are for people who are low income, uninsured, or are undocumented residents. See listing below of those open for urgent/emergency care.

4. Several local health departments have an oral health program. See listing below of those open for urgent/emergency care.

5. Illinois has three dental schools. Information about accessing urgent dental care is available by calling or visiting their website.

   **University of Illinois – Chicago**
   312-996-8636  
   [https://dentistry.uic.edu/patients/appointments](https://dentistry.uic.edu/patients/appointments)

   **Southern Illinois University- Alton**
   618-474-7000  

   **Midwestern University – Downers Grove**
   630-743-4500  
   [https://www.mwuclinics.com/illinois/services/dental](https://www.mwuclinics.com/illinois/services/dental)
Federally Qualified Health Centers with Open Oral Health Programs

**Aunt Martha’s in Carpentersville**  
3003 Wakefield Drive, Carpentersville, IL 60110  
847-551-8009  
Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday 8 a.m. - 2 p.m.

**Aunt Martha’s Women Health Center**  
233 W. Joe Orr Road, Chicago Heights, IL 60411  
877-692-8686  
Monday-Friday 8 a.m. - 2 p.m.

**Central Counties Health Centers, Inc.**  
2239 E. Cook St., Springfield, IL 62703  
217-788-2300  
Monday, Tuesday, Thursday 8 a.m.- 5 p.m.; Wednesday 10 a.m. -7 p.m.  
Not using teledentistry

**Erie Foster Avenue Health Center**  
5215 N. California Ave., 7th floor, Chicago IL 60625 (New patients - children under 18/Erie medical patients)  
312-666-3494  
Monday and Wednesday 10 a.m. - 7 p.m.; Tuesday, Thursday and Friday 8:30 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.  
Using teledentistry

**Friend Health Western**  
5843 S. Western Ave., Chicago, IL  
773-434-8600  
9 a.m. - 5 p.m.  
We are currently taking phone calls for patients at highest risk of COVID-19 and/or if they are symptomatic.

**Greater Elgin Family Care Center**  
450 Dundee Ave., Elgin, IL 60120  
847-608-1344  
Monday-Thursday 10 a.m. - 7:20 p.m., Friday 10 a.m. - 5 p.m., Saturday 8 a.m. - 3 p.m.  
Not using teledentistry

**Lawndale Christian Health Center Dental Clinic**  
3750 W. Ogden  
872-588-3220  
Monday to Friday 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. with last appointment at 4 p.m.  
Dentists are screening calls to determine emergency.
Mile Square Health Center
7037 S. Stony Island Ave., Chicago, IL 60649
312-996-2000 and ask for Mile Square Dental
Monday and Thursday 8 a.m.-- 8 p.m.; Wednesday and Friday 8 a.m. -- 5 p.m.; Saturday 8 a.m. - 12 p.m.
Utilizing teledentistry
Have negative pressure space, so we can do simple extractions

PrimeCare Community Health
West Town – 1431 N. Western Ave, Suite 401, Chicago, IL 60622
773-269-5540
Hours are fluid, but for now they are: Monday – Thursday 8:30 a.m. - 3 p.m.; Friday 8 a.m. - 12 p.m.
Using teledentistry phone and video

Rural Health, Inc
513 N. Main St., Anna IL 62906
618-833-4475
Monday – Friday, 8 a.m. - 4 p.m.

SIU Center for Family Medicine clinic
109 3rd St., Lincoln, IL 62656
217-735-2317
Monday – Friday 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. to take calls and a dentist can be reached consultation/teledentistry visits. Patients are seen in the clinic on an as-needed basis (typically 2 days a week).

TCA Health
1029 E. 130th St., Chicago IL, 60628
773-995-6300
Monday – Friday 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.
Patients are not being seen in the office; using teledentistry

VNA Health Care
400 N. Highland Ave., Aurora IL 60506
630-892-4355
Monday – Friday 8 a.m.- 4 p.m.
Using teledentistry

Whiteside County Health Department
1300 W. 2nd St., Rock Falls, IL 61071
815-626-2230
Monday – Friday (seeing patients) 8 a.m. - 2 p.m.; Monday – Friday (answering phones) 8 a.m. - 4 p.m.
Using teledentistry for current patients

Will County Community Health Center
1106 Neal Ave., Joliet, IL 60433
815-774-7300
Monday – Friday 7:30 a.m. - 4 p.m.; Saturday 7:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.
We can screen on phone.
## Local Health Departments with open Oral and Dental Care Programs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Health Department</th>
<th>City</th>
<th>Phone number</th>
<th>Contact</th>
<th>Emergencies oral and dental care only</th>
<th>Patient Qualifiers / Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bond County Health Department</td>
<td>Greensville</td>
<td>618-664-1442</td>
<td>Sean Eifert</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Patients of all ages accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cass County Health Department</td>
<td>Virginia</td>
<td>217-452-3057</td>
<td>Teresa Armstrong</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Patients of all ages accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Champaign-Urbana Public Health District</td>
<td>Champaign</td>
<td>217-352-7961</td>
<td>Alicia Ekhoff</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Patients of all ages accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Health Partnerships</td>
<td>Aurora, Mendota, Harvard</td>
<td>815-943-4339</td>
<td>Ricardo Garcia</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Patients of all ages accepted. Aurora clinic 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. Wed.; Mendota 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. Thurs.; Harvard 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. clinics Mon., Thurs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crusaders - Rockford</td>
<td>Rockford</td>
<td>815-490-1600</td>
<td>Dulce Staff Peggy, admin</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Patients of all ages accepted all locations 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Douglas County Public Health Department</td>
<td>Tuscola</td>
<td>217-253-4137</td>
<td>Lisa Biehl</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Patients of all ages accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DuPage County Health Department</td>
<td>Wheaton</td>
<td>630-221-7340</td>
<td>Beth Enke</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Patients of all ages accepted, but must meet the health depts financial guidelines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edgar County Public Health Dept.</td>
<td>Paris</td>
<td>217-652-2212</td>
<td>Monica Dunn</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Patients of all ages accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fulton County Health Department</td>
<td>Canton</td>
<td>309-647-1134</td>
<td>Amy Rose</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Patients of all ages accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hancock</td>
<td>Carthage</td>
<td>217-357-2171</td>
<td>Jana West</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Patients of all ages accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knox County Health Department</td>
<td>Galesburg</td>
<td>309-344-2224</td>
<td>Erin Olsen</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Patients of all ages accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lake County Dental Clinic</td>
<td>Waukegan</td>
<td>847-377-8599</td>
<td>Sandy</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Patients of all ages accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Macoupin County</td>
<td>Carlinville</td>
<td>217-839-4100</td>
<td>Laura Cox</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Patients of all ages accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McLean County Health Department</td>
<td>Bloomington</td>
<td>309-888-5450</td>
<td>Tammy Brooks</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Peds only currently</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## COVID-19 Oral and Dental Care

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Health Department</th>
<th>City</th>
<th>Phone number</th>
<th>Contact</th>
<th>Emergencies oral and dental care only</th>
<th>Patient Qualifiers / Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Peoria City/County Health Department</td>
<td>Peoria</td>
<td>309-679-6000</td>
<td>Dr. Susan Bishop</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Patients of all ages accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stevenson County Health Department/Dental</td>
<td>Freeport</td>
<td>815-235-8271</td>
<td>Dr. Grinter</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Patients of all ages accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stickney Public Health District</td>
<td>Stickney</td>
<td>708-458-4126</td>
<td>Dr. Marchese</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Must live in Stickney township all ages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Children’s Clinic (OPRFIWS)</td>
<td>Oak Park</td>
<td>708-848-0528</td>
<td>Audrey Griffen</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Under 18 only, no geographical restrictions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whiteside County Health Department/Dental</td>
<td>Rock Falls</td>
<td>815-626-2230 Ext.1255</td>
<td>Melissa Johnson</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Patients of all ages accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will County Community Health Center</td>
<td>Joliet</td>
<td>815-774-4495</td>
<td>Dr. Garg</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Patients of all ages accepted Mon-Fri 7:30 a.m.-4 p.m. Sat 7:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m. doing phone screenings</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### For questions and updates:

**Illinois Department of Public Health**  
Office of Health Promotion  
Division of Oral Health  
Sherri.Foran@illinois.gov

### Resources