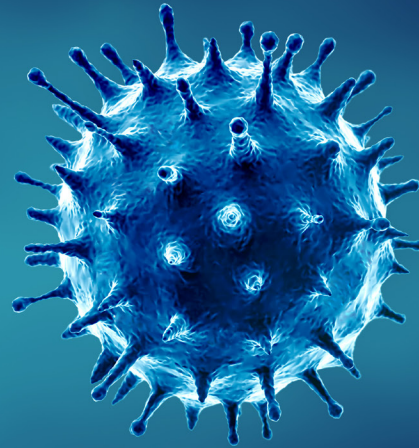


# Recommendations for Dental Hygienists During COVID-19 Outbreak



COVID-19 is impacting the dental profession. As primary oral health care providers, dental hygienists are potentially at risk of contracting the virus. This document will help dental hygienists to mitigate the risk.

## Possible transmission routes for COVID-19 in dental clinics

- Studies have shown that the COVID-19 virus is present in saliva.
- Procedures such as ultrasonic scaling and air polishing create aerosols that may be contaminated with the virus.
- Common transmission routes are direct transmission (inhalation of respiratory droplets produced during coughing or sneezing) and contact transmission (touching surfaces that have been contaminated by droplets or aerosols and then touching one's face).

## Client screening procedure

Screen clients prior to their appointments, both when confirming and in-office:

- Ask whether they have travelled or been in contact with someone who has travelled outside Canada in the last 21 days. Reschedule the appointment as required.
- Remind clients that if they have flu-like symptoms, such as fever, cough or difficulty breathing, they should cancel/reschedule their appointments and see a medical professional.
- Ensure hand sanitizer is available at the front desk and encourage its use by all clients upon arrival.

## Infection control protocols

- **Aerosol reduction:**
  - Have clients rinse with antibacterial mouth rinse prior to treatment
  - Use high-volume suction during aerosol-producing procedures
- **Personal protective equipment:**
  - Safety glasses
  - Gloves
  - Masks: minimum one mask per client  
\*\*\* (see risk assessment guidelines below)
  - Gowns
  - Face shield when performing aerosol-producing tasks
- **Risk assessment guidelines for mask usage**  
(to address mask shortage):
  - **Level 1 mask:** use when minimal fluids, spatter or aerosols are produced, e.g., intraoral exams, taking impressions, taking radiographs, sanitizing the operatory. *Can also be used in conjunction with a full-face shield when scaling with an ultrasonic and air polishing.*
  - **Level 2 mask:** use when moderate fluids, spatter or aerosols will be produced, e.g., scaling and root planing with hand instruments. *Can also be used in conjunction with a full-face shield when scaling with an ultrasonic and air polishing.*
  - **Level 3 mask:** use when moderate to heavy fluids, spatter or aerosols will be produced, e.g., ultrasonic scaling and air polishing

\*\*\**The layering of lower level masks for added protection is not recommended by public health experts.*

Follow standard infection prevention and control protocols for sanitizing the operatory. In addition, disinfect public areas in the dental office regularly throughout the day. This includes door handles, counters, desks, tables, and chairs.

***Please share with all members of your dental team!***