

# OFFICE UPDATE

## Covid-19

### Alaska Governor Mandates (as of 4/21/20) Highlights

- Regardless of symptoms, all health care facilities must screen all patients for recent illness, travel, fever, or recent exposure to COVID-19
  - Any **emergency** dental/**periodontal care** can proceed with proper Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
  - On May 4th, **non-urgent care** can proceed if
    - the procedure cannot be postponed without significant decrease in the quality of life
- And
- If the procedure generates aerosols, a negative PCR for SARS-Co V-2 must be obtained within 48 hours prior to the procedure.

### To our Valued Patients,



For the past 10 years, Fairbanks Periodontal Associates has taken great pride in treating our patients compassionately and safely. We have always maintained strict adherence to regulations from the CDC and ADA. Universal precautions, such as masks, gloves, eye protection, and disinfection of treatment rooms have always been the standard in our practice. Our sterilization procedures remain state-of-the-art, with all instruments being sterilized before any use.

The arrival of the Covid-19 pandemic has not changed our guiding principles. For more than a month now, we have been providing urgent/emergency care only and have been adhering to the new CDC and ADA guidelines.

So, what is different now? Since March 20th we have initiated various safety protocols. Over the phone, we are asking screening questions to increase safety for all. We are also requesting those who can arrive alone for their appointment do so to limit the number of people in the office. We encourage you to wear your face covering into our clinic and wash your hands prior to entering the office (there is a restroom in the common area). We



## **Latest Alaska Governor Mandates (as of 4/21/20) Highlights**

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- Aerosol generating procedures include Periodontal maintenance with ultrasonic scalers, SRPs, all periodontal surgeries (bone grafting, gum grafting, dental implants).
- The Alaska Dental Board continues to ask for more clarification on the details of the testing requirement.
- As the mandate reads now, all non-urgent procedures that generate an aerosol would require that patients obtain a negative covid-19 test within the 48 hours prior to their appointment. At this time, that is not a realistic expectation given the available testing in our community.
- There are many other bullet points in the Mandate and it can be found at
- [gov.alaska.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/04152020-Covid-19-mandate-015.pdf](https://gov.alaska.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/04152020-Covid-19-mandate-015.pdf)

expect these steps to continue for the foreseeable future.

Commonly touched surfaces such as door handles, waiting room furniture and counter-tops are disinfected on a regular schedule multiple times throughout the day. Pens and digital tablets are disinfected after each use. We have removed reading materials from our clinics to further minimize transmission of the Covid-19 virus. Social distancing is being followed in our common areas and we have limited seating. We are constantly re-evaluating scheduling, staffing and other items to adhere to the recommendations and guidelines as they change.

As a staff, we start each day by taking our own temperatures and do so throughout the day. We will also take your temperature when you arrive.

Our level of PPE (personal protective equipment) has been enhanced in accordance with the most recent CDC and ADA recommendations. Our patient coordinators will be wearing face masks and practicing social distancing when they greet you. Rest assured, it is the same warm, caring person it has always been, behind the mask.

Additionally, our clinical staff: assistants, hygienists and dentists will all be wearing the most effective, CDC approved, face masks

available. Over the last month, new regulations have been instituted for gowns, masks and face shields. In accordance with guidelines clinical staff may wear a face shield and either a washable or disposable gown for your appointment. While you may not recognize us after we are suited up, these are the same caring, skilled people you have come to know and trust. We are, through multiple sources, working diligently to obtain all necessary garments and additional PPE required to perform dentistry. Regulations on a federal and state level are still being clarified and modified but as regulations change, please know that we will adhere to them.

Another change which, again, the CDC and ADA have recommended, is a pre-procedure mouth rinse. Immediately



before any procedure, we will give you 10ml of a 1.5% hydrogen peroxide rinse. We will ask you to rinse for 30 seconds with 5ml and spit it into the suction. The goal is to lessen any virus particles in saliva being spread into the air.

So, as we anticipate returning to a more normal level of dental care, please know we are following all guidelines associated with preventing the spread of Covid-19. As further clarifications and changes are made, we will be implementing those, too. We are working daily to not only implement, but also anticipate further precautions. Above are just a few of the list of topics we are addressing, however, knowing they are the most visible changes, we wanted to specifically touch on them.



We hope to begin seeing patients for routine services as soon as the mandates allow. If you have more specific questions, please feel free to ask us. We want you to be safe, confident and comfortable in our clinic.

Warm Regards,

*Melissa Webster, DMD MS*

Fairbanks Periodontal Associates