

MANAGEMENT & TREATMENT OF DENTAL EMERGENCIES DURING COVID-19

What is a "true emergency situation"?

A dental emergency exists if professional judgement indicates that a person needs immediate attention to address oral trauma, pain, infection, bleeding or other associated medical complications.

How should emergency cases be managed?

First, emergency cases should be managed via telephone by taking a verbal history of the patient's condition and providing appropriate pharmacotherapy if indicated.

In those few cases where telephone management is insufficient, clinical assessment may be necessary provided the dental practice has appropriate safety precautions and PPE in place.

Some **general dentists** may offer emergency services **in office** for patients that fall under the current guidelines for asymptomatic patients who have been screened for acute respiratory illness i.e.. Absence of a fever, a cough or difficulty breathing; NO recent travel outside of the province in the last 14 days; No close contact with confirmed or probable case of COVID-19. These offices must have a pre-screening questionnaire and have temperature evaluation of each patient to be seen in the office prior to any treatment being provided. All attempts should be made to minimize aerosol creation. Appropriate PPE must be worn and IPC protocols must be strictly adhered to. For those dental professionals who are only screening or are not offering emergency services in office then emergency patients should be referred to appropriate practitioners (see below). Strong communication will be the key to a successful patient management in this difficult time.

Pediatric dentists, OMFS and some hospital dentists all have access to **hospital resources**, the ability to admit patients to hospital, and have had N95 mask fitting and training. These offices may be used to treat dental emergencies that fall under the current guidelines for asymptomatic patients who have been screened for acute respiratory illness i.e. Absence of a fever, a cough or difficulty breathing; NO recent travel outside of the province in the last 14 days; No close contact with confirmed or probable case of COVID-19. These offices must have a pre-screening questionnaire and have temperature evaluation of each patient to be seen in the office prior to any treatment being provided. All attempts should be made to minimize aerosol creation. Appropriate PPE must be worn and IPC protocols must be strictly adhered to. These practitioners will also be limited to emergency care at this time. This group of practitioners will also be able to provide emergent dental care to COVID-19 patients in the appropriate setting. Emergent dental care on COVID-19 positive patients will need to occur in the hospital setting with appropriate PPE and N95 mask, gowns, glove and eye protection. This should only be completed by appropriately trained practitioners with experience and in the OR setting under a negative pressure ventilation system. This is consistent with the medical model.

Emergency access to care will need to be offered throughout this time in order to keep dental issues out of ER's unnecessarily.

Flowchart for Dental Emergencies of the ASYMPTOMATIC PATIENT

PHONE PATIENT – attempt pharmacotherapeutic care

If issue not resolved



**TREAT IN DENTAL OFFICE IF YOU ARE EQUIPPED, TRAINED AND
CAPABLE TO DO SO**

If issue not resolved



REFER TO SPECIALIST

Our goal is to keep minor dental emergencies out of ERs