



COVID-19 Precautions: *The New and the Old*

May 2020

We are very proud of the standards upheld at Osborne Family Dental regarding safety and infection control. Our practices have always met or exceeded standards set forth by the American Dental Association (ADA), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA).

The recent novel coronavirus pandemic has caused us to rededicate ourselves to our previous practices and to institute some new ones that are specific to the current epidemic level in Ohio.

Like anything new, some of these recently introduced practices may seem strange and unnatural. Some of them are likely temporary, and some of them may represent the new normal for the foreseeable future. In any case, they are there to ensure your safety and that of our staff. With them in place, we feel that our office environment is one of safety to all who come.

Read below to familiarize yourself with some of the precautions, new and old, you will experience when you next visit us at the office.



What to expect when you arrive

- By phone or text, you will be contacted and asked a few screening questions in order recognize potential coronavirus carriers.
- Limited seating will be available in the reception area to ensure social distancing, and persons who are seated will be provided with a mask to wear during their stay.
- Utilizing a “virtual waiting room,” you may opt to wait in your car, phoning us when you’ve arrived and leaving us your cellular number. We will call you when your treatment room is ready.
- Only patients will be permitted to enter clinical areas. Adult patients are kindly requested to not bring their children, including infants, with them to appointments.
- Parents accompanying a minor will be requested to remain in the reception area for the duration of their child’s appointment. Parents will not be permitted in treatment rooms during the appointment.
- If you choose to be accompanied by a friend or family member, he or she will be asked to wait in the vehicle for the duration of your visit. They will be notified when treatment has been completed.
- A hand sanitizer containing at least 60% ethyl alcohol will be present at the office entrance. You will be asked to utilize this solution when you arrive. Another station will be available at the exit. If your skin is overly sensitive to alcohol hand sanitizers you may opt instead to utilize the restroom, and will be asked to perform a 20-30 second handwashing with soap and water.
- Also, on arrival your temperature will be recorded using a disinfected forehead thermometer. If a fever of 100.4 or higher, or respiratory symptoms are present, you will be advised to seek medical attention, and your appointment will be rescheduled by phone.
- You will be escorted to your treatment room without delay as seating in the reception area will be limited to promote social distancing.
- There will be Plexiglas cough or sneeze barriers installed at the reception and discharge desks.
- Social distancing markers (floor tape) will be present on the floor in certain areas to assist patients in proper social distancing.
- Pens available at the reception and discharge desks will be single use.
- All children’s toys and magazines will have been temporarily removed from the office.
- Wherever possible, doors will be propped open to eliminate the use of door handles.
- Before treatment is begun, you will be asked to perform a 45 second swish and spit with a 1.5% hydrogen peroxide solution. Don’t worry, it tastes pretty good.



Staff practices

- Hand hygiene is the front-line defense against the spread of infectious diseases. All staff members will thoroughly wash their hands for thirty seconds with soap and water upon arrival, before leaving, as well as before, after, and between each patient encounter.
- This practice will be supplemented with the liberal use of hand sanitizer gels containing at least 60% ethyl alcohol.
- The temperatures of staff members will be recorded each morning before work. Staff members with fevers or developing signs of illness will be sent home for a period of two weeks.
- Staff members will engage in social distancing of six feet or more whenever possible within the limits imposed by the performance of their duties.
- Clinical clothing will be donned and removed at the office and laundered daily. Clinical clothing will not be worn to and from work.
- During patient treatment, staff members will be wearing long-sleeve clinical jackets or full-length gowns, non-latex exam gloves covering their wrists, level 3 or N95 facemasks, eye protection such as glasses, goggles, or surgical loops, and a full coverage face shield. Gloves, masks, and face shields will be donned before entry into treatment rooms. Gloves will be discarded using a bird beak technique before exiting any treatment room.
- Staff members will maintain excellent personal hygiene with long hair tied back or contained in a head cover, and nails trimmed short and clean.
- Cell phones are to be kept clean and away from clinical treatment areas. Staff will be asked to access their cell phones during lunch and at the conclusion of the workday.
- Staff members will have access to individual storage bins to isolate their street clothing from those of other staff members and from the general environment.
- Clinical surfaces and workspaces will be free of clutter and equipment. All surfaces will be either barrier protected or wiped with an approved tuberculocidal disinfectant according to the manufacturer's instructions, or both. This will be performed before and after each treatment room usage.
- Sterilized instruments will remain in their sterilization pouches and not opened until immediately before use.



Staff practices cont.

- Dental hygienists will utilize high volume suction when using ultrasonic instruments.
- Between patients, face shields will be wiped with a disposable disinfectant wipe and dried with a fibercloth which will be placed in laundry cycle immediately after use.
- Disposable materials will be utilized wherever available and disposed of immediately after use.
- Non-disposable materials will be disinfected and sterilized appropriately and immediately.
- Every autoclave cycle (instrument sterilization) will be run with confirmation systems to verify the complete and effective sterilization of all clinical instruments. Frequent spore strips will be sent to culture labs as a backup confirmation of complete sterilization.
- All water lines are closed water systems employing a one-way flow of distilled water provided by a certified water supplier. Lines will be disinfected daily according to training and recommendations.



Patient screening questions

- Before your appointment you will be screened either by a text message and whenever possible, by a phone call from one of our scheduling coordinators. You will be asked a small number of questions. You will be asked the same questions when you arrive for your visit.
- You will be asked the following questions:
 - Do you have a fever or have you had a fever or felt hot and feverish in the last 14 days?
 - Are you experiencing shortness of breath or difficulties breathing?
 - Do you have a cough?
 - Do you have any other flu-like symptoms such as chills, body aches, persistent headache, or fatigue?
 - Have you recently experienced a loss of taste or smell?
 - Are you or have you recently been in contact with a confirmed COVID-19 positive individual?
- Patients answering yes to any of the above questions will be requested to seek medical attention and their appointment will be rescheduled by phone. You will also be asked:
 - Do you have heart disease, lung disease, kidney disease, diabetes, any auto-immune disorders, particularly which are poorly controlled.
 - Are you considered immunocompromised or undergoing treatment for cancer such as chemotherapy or radiation therapy?
- Patients answering yes to either of these two questions might consider a conversation with the dentist. It might be advisable to defer elective treatment to a later date.



We have always taken pride in the uniquely strong relationship we have with our family of patients. You are very dear to us. Your smiles, your unequaled online reviews, your unqualified expressions of confidence in us, and your common acts of kindness have always been a source of energy to our whole staff; a source of energy that drives us to live up to the trust you've placed in us. We will commit ourselves to being the best that we can be for you and the loved ones you entrust to us.

We also hope that each of you will remain safe. Wash your hands frequently. Practice smart social distancing and keep an eye on those who are at risk and maybe cut off from some of the services we take for granted. Our communities are on the road to recovery.

Sincerely,

Robert Osborne, Dina Farah, and staff.

