CONVERGE DENTAL
Where People, Practice & Profit Meet

Returning to Work: Interim Guidance Toolkit

Appointment Confirmation Process

During times of uncertainty, people need communication and reassurance about coming back to your dental office. Your communication and pre-appointment information gathering channels may vary depending on the size of your practice and available resources (phone, video conference, text reminders, secure website and etc.)

Personal **phone confirmation** is highly suggested for pre-screening patients prior to coming into the office.

Prior to confirming patients:

1. Clearly define health screening questions.

- Follow **CDC/ADA** recommended **Patient Screening Questionnaire Form**
  - CDC: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/phone-guide/index.html
  - ADA: https://bit.ly/3d0CRYi
- Positive responses to any of these would likely indicate a deeper discussion with the dentist before proceeding with elective dental treatment.

2. Set protocol for screening patients with respiratory symptoms and/or exposure to respiratory infections

- Follow CDC recommendation for two approaches to determine clearance to abandon quarantine
  - **"Time-since-illness-onset and time-since-recovery strategy"** (non-test-based strategy)
  - **"Test-based strategy**"
- If referring patients for testing, see the list of **State and Territorial Health Department Website** for your specific area's information.
  https://www.cdc.gov/publichealthgateway/healthdirectories/healthdepartments.html

3. As a team, prepare responses regarding patient safety and COVID-19.

- Consider reviewing **COVID-19 FAQS FROM PATIENTS**
  https://www.convergedental.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/COVID-19-FAQS-FROM-PATIENTS.pdf

Confirmation Process:

Be **confident** and **prepared** to answer questions of concern with your patients.

1. Confirm patient appointment over the phone 2-3 days prior to the appointment (despite 3rd party confirmation systems)

- Follow CDC/ADA recommended **Patient Screening Questionnaire Form** for health pre-screening
  - Inform patients that these questions will be repeated at time of arrival
  - Consider asking if patient has taken any of the following medications in the past 2-3 weeks for fever:
    - Acetaminophen, Ibuprofen, Naproxen sodium, or Aspirin
- Update medical history
- Update personal information: email, address and etc.
- Update insurance information

2. Inform patients that upon arrival to the office:

- They will be asked to sanitize or wash their hands
- Their temperature will be taken in order to ensure nothing has changed since the phone conversation.
  - Temperature should read <100.4°F
  - Touchless forehead scan is convenient and preferred. If not available, any thermometer is appropriate as long as cleaned appropriately between uses. (New guideline from CDC)
- They will be asked to rinse with anti-microbial mouthwash to reduce their bacterial load and decrease hazardous aerosol.

3. Ask patients to limit extra companions on their trip to your office to only essential people in order to reduce the number of people in the reception area.

4. Inform your patients to call upon arrival and wait in their car until they are ready to be seen for their appointment. They will be called or texted upon when they should enter the practice.

5. If you have done so, direct patients to your COVID-19 page on your website to review pre-screening health questionnaire, FAQ, and Post COVID-19 patient experience guidelines, and other resources.

6. If you need to leave a voicemail or are sending a text message, ask the patient to call the office prior to their appointment for preliminary screening.

7. Reassure your patients that all of the changes to the normal way is to ensure their safety, the safety of the team and any public with whom they might come in contact.

Scheduling Process

Prior to scheduling patients:

1. Determine if the office will be adding extra days to manage patient demand or shorten days due to not enough demand

2. Schedule appointments apart enough to minimize possible contact with other patients in the waiting room.

- Provide an ample amount of time per appointment to allow for proper treatment and room disinfection and turnaround time to stay within the infection control guidelines by CDC and OSHA
  - As a team, identify times per procedure:
  - Hygiene: adult prophylaxis, periodontal maintenance, Scaling and Root Planning (SRP), child prophylaxis. 1 hour or 1hr 15min per hygiene appointment.
  - Restorative: fillings, quadrant dentistry, crown prep/seat; Cerec dentistry, and etc.
  - Consider staggering appointments to adhere to social distancing recommendations

3. Identify the number of rooms dedicated for hygiene and operative treatments

4. Prioritize patients that have been rescheduled from March and April due to COVID-19 pandemic

- Periodontally involved patients
- Hygiene patients
- Patients with restorative needs…fillings, crowns and etc.
- Invisalign patients

5. Consider scheduling patients with complex medical and respiratory history once COVID-19 pandemic calms down.

- Such patients are at a higher risk in a compromised hazardous aerosol environment
- Conditions might include but not limited to
  - Asthma, COPD, heart disease, diabetes and etc.

6. Cancellation Policy:

- Inform patients to give 72-48-hour cancellation notice, which will help the office offer the open opportunity to another patient.
- If patients need to cancel due to illness, consider waiving any last-minute cancellation fee policies that might exist.

Scheduling process:

1. Upon scheduling an appointment review with patient:

- **CDC Pre-screening health questionnaire** and their medical history https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/phone-guide/index.html
- Office **check-in protocol**

2. If patients need to schedule **additional** appointments after treatment

- **Hygiene appointments** can be scheduled in the treatment room by the hygienist.
- Additional hygiene or operative services such as SRP, fillings, crowns and etc.
    - Generate a treatment plan and email it to the patient
    - Discuss the treatment plan cost with the patient over the phone
    - Schedule the services over the phone after reviewing the treatment plan cost
    - Depending on treatment urgency and patient comfort, some patients might schedule their appointments while in the office prior to reviewing treatment cost.

3. Patients that might be hesitant to come in, but present with a dental issue:

- **Utilize Teledentistry, if applicable, for:**
    - Patient consultation, evaluation, screening and prescribing
    - Prescreening patients to assess and prioritize or defer treatment
    - Utilizing live video, messaging and images to determine possible dental issues
- **Fee for service**
    - Charge patient a fee and submit insurance claim as a complementary service to your patients
- **Codes** to submit to insurance
    - D0140 — limited oral evaluation, problem focused
    - D0170 — re-evaluation, limited, problem focused (established patient; not postoperative visit)
    - D0171 — re-evaluation, post-operative office visit
- **Submit one of the following codes together with the above applicable code:**
    - D9995 — teledentistry synchronous; real-time encounter
    - D9996 — asynchronous; information stored and forwarded to dentist for subsequent review

Payment Process

Prior to collecting payment:

1. Identify payment options that your office can accept while avoiding collecting cash or touching credit cards. These steps help reduce patient time in the office after treatment and allows time to prepare the office for the next patient entering.

- Options might include:
  - Apple Pay
  - Google Pay
  - Contactless Credit Card

Payment process:

1. If patient did not pay with contactless form of payment for treatment or product purchased prior to leaving the office:

- Have patient call you after treatment from the car to collect payment by providing credit card information to process payment.

2. If patient is not able to make a full payment:

- Create a payment plan

3. If treatment plan presentation is required prior to collecting payment:

- Email the treatment plan presentation to the patient
- Discuss treatment plan cost over the phone
- Collect payment over the phone or set up payment plan to make dentistry affordable, especially now
- Email receipt or payment plan to the patient

Check-In Process

Prior to patient check-in:

1. Prepare the **waiting room**, **bathrooms**, and **patient consultation rooms** as recommended by CDC

- Follow guidance for reception area preparation in the provided link: https://www.convergedental.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Returning-to-Work-Interim-Guidance-Toolkit.pdf

- Depending on your team size, identify if you will have one designated person that will be in charge of check-in process or rotate between roles.

Check-in process:

1. Once patient calls upon arrival:

- Let patient know that you will text or call them when they are ready to be seated.

2. Upon entering the office:

- Direct patient to the hand sanitizing station or restroom to wash hands with soap
- Take patient temperature:
    - Temperature should read <100.4°F
    - **Touchless** forehead scan is convenient and **preferred**. If not available, any thermometer is appropriate as long as cleaned properly between uses, as per new CDC interim guidelines.
- Pre-rinse with anti-microbial mouth rinse.
    - Latest CDC guidelines suggests that there are no documented evidence exists at this time to support the pre-procedural rinses to reduce the transmission of the COVID-19 virus. However, previous studies have shown that 0.12% Chlorhexidine drastically reduces bacterial load when used as a pre procedural mouth rinse; hence, reduces hazardous aerosol.
- Go over CDC/ADA recommended **Patient Screening Questionnaire Form** with the patient
    - Positive responses to any of these would likely indicate a deeper discussion with the dentist before proceeding with elective dental treatment
    - If referring patients for testing, see the list of **State and Territorial Health Department Websites** https://www.cdc.gov/publichealthgateway/healthdirectories/healthdepartments.html