

## New Policies and Procedures

Due to the Covid-19/Coronavirus pandemic, we are doing everything we can to keep everyone safe. Fortunately, most of our sterilization and disinfection procedures already help prevent the spread of bacterial and viral diseases, including coronavirus. Additionally, unlike many other dental offices, most of our dental rooms are closed, which helps prevent the spread of infection. While we have been closed, our entire office (waiting room, treatment rooms, walls, bathrooms, etc.) has been cleaned and sanitized, so you can take comfort in knowing that the office your family is entering is as safe as any dental office can be. We all know coronavirus is spread through respiratory droplets. Since we work right at the source of those droplets, we need to take extra precautions above and beyond most professions, so we have had to adopt new policies and procedures. These policies have been developed with guidance of the Centers for Disease Control, American Dental Association, American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry, and the Massachusetts Dental Society. These policies will be in place for the foreseeable future, so if you feel that they might not work for your family, then feel free to call back in 3-6 months to see if they have changed, or we will be happy to help with your transition to another dentist. The policies and procedures are as follows:

-Families with multiple children will be asked to schedule appointments in the same room, and will be seen by the same hygienist, back-to-back. We will no longer be allowing siblings to have appointments at the same time in different rooms. While we will be cleaning and sanitizing every room between patients, keeping family members in the same room will limit potential exposure to your family, other families, and our office family.

-You will be asked a series of screening questions over the phone a day or two before your child's appointment.

-Our waiting room area is closed. The airplane, toys, and games are off limits to help prevent the spread of infection. When you arrive for your appointment, please remain in your car and call the office to let us know that you are in the parking lot. We will let you know if your child's room is ready, or will text you when it is.

-All parents and older patients MUST wear a mask when entering the building. However, younger patients, or patients with special needs, who cannot tolerate wearing a mask, will be exempt. We do not have enough supplies to provide masks to parents.

-You will be met at the front door of the office by a staff member. They will immediately take your temperature and your child's temperature. If either is above 100.4 degrees, you will be dismissed and asked to reschedule your appointment over the phone.

-You and your child will be given hand sanitizer to use.

-Screening questions, medical history update, and consent forms will be reviewed and signed at the front.

-Your child will be escorted to their room by the assistant or hygienist. In order to minimize the number of people in our facility we STRONGLY URGE parents to return to their car during the duration of your child's appointment. If you feel that this might be too difficult for you, or your child, then you may need to contact us in several to see if the policies have changed. This includes the following procedures:

- routine orthodontic appointments or re-evaluations
- cleanings on older patients, or younger patients who have exhibited the maturity to be able to do it on their own
- restorative or sealant appointments for older patients, or younger patients who have exhibited the maturity to be able to do it on their own

Your children are left alone at school on a daily basis, with you putting your faith and trust in the school staff to take care of your children. We will care for them just as well, and hope that you would extend to us the same faith and trust.

Procedures in which parents may be allowed to accompany their children:

- initial dental visits
- cleaning appointments for very young children
- orthodontic consults
- delivery of orthodontic appliances or placing of braces (when allowed in the future)
- initial restorative appointments for younger children, or follow-up restorative appointments for apprehensive patients
- appointments for children with special health care needs

-After your child's appointment, you will be called by the hygienist, assistant, dentist, or front desk. They will let you know how the appointment went, our findings, and any follow-up appointments that might need to be made.

-Your child will be escorted to the front of the office where you can meet them at the door.

-Unfortunately, our Treasure Tower is shut down at the moment, so we won't be giving away prizes at this time.

-We are not charging an extra sterilization/PPE fee at this time. However, we may need to revisit this policy in the future due to the increased number and cost of supplies needed to keep everyone safe, as well as the additional time needed to sanitize rooms between appointments.

-We will be working limited hours with limited staff, and appointments will be spaced further apart to allow for additional cleaning of the rooms between patients.

Drs. Derek and Veena will be working on alternating days, as will our hygiene staff, in an effort to prevent an outbreak that could affect our entire staff, should someone become sick. This may make it difficult for patients to see a specific requested hygienist and/or doctor on the day their appointment is scheduled.

We do not expect these practices to be permanent, and hope to resume “normal” life as quickly as possible. However, we do not want to do that at the expense of safety. Again, we appreciate your understanding, patience, and courtesy during these stressful times.

Children’s Dental Health Center