

ADA Information and FAQs on the Center for Disease Control's (CDC) Interim Guidance for Dental Settings

The [CDC's Interim Infection Prevention and Control Guidance for Dental Settings During the COVID-19 Response](#) recommends that dental providers, "Postpone elective procedures, surgeries, and non-urgent dental visits." This guidance was most recently updated on April 27, 2020. Dental practices in many states are planning to reopen for the full range of dental procedures, causing uncertainty among dentists, public officials, healthcare stakeholders and the media.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Does the CDC's guidance supersede my state's authority to open dental practices for non-emergency care?

A: The CDC does not have regulatory authority over the operation of dental practices. The guidance issued on April 27 is a non-binding recommendation.

The CDC puts the onus on local and state authorities to make the final decision based on all the factors that should be considered. According to the [CDC's guidance](#), "Dental health care professionals should regularly consult their state dental boards or other regulating agencies for requirements specific to their jurisdictions."

Q: Why was this guidance issued?

A: The CDC is making this broad-based recommendation to minimize the risk of infection for dentists, members of the dental team and patients. This guidance cannot take into consideration the impact of local infection rates or the effect that long-term postponement of needed dental procedures may have on patients' oral health.

Q: Is the CDC planning to change its guidance any time soon?

A: The CDC has not publicly stated any plans to revise its current guidance. The American Dental Association (ADA) has shared its concerns that the current CDC Interim Guidance for Dental Settings should be updated to reflect the need for dental practices to open for non-emergency care and elective procedures. The ADA is drafting a letter to submit to the CDC that formally communicates these concerns and urges the CDC to update its current guidance accordingly.

Q: What can state dental associations and dentists do locally to help ensure dental practices are allowed to provide non-emergency and elective procedures?

A: State dental associations and dentists are encouraged to reference the ADA Return to Work Interim Guidance [Toolkit](#), which provides a variety of resources to help protect patients, staff and dentists from COVID-19 as dental practices re-engage in providing the full range of oral health care.

Q: How do requirements to open dental practices in my state compare with requirements in other states?

A: States control what procedures are allowed to be provided, largely through their licensing boards. For example, in Ohio, the state dental board has chosen to refer dentists to the CDC and ADA for Personal Protection Equipment and infection control recommendations, but not what procedures can be provided in Ohio's dental practices. State dental associations are encouraged to contact their state dental boards and also be aware of any current [state mandates](#).