

Monday, March 16, 2020

The health and well-being of my patients, my staff and even the families of my patients has been my highest priority since taking my Hippocratic Oath to, among other things: do no harm, maintain sympathy and understanding which extends to my patients' families and to remember that prevention precedes cure.

My office has always maintained the highest level and state-of-the-art precautionary measures against the transmission of ANY disease. At the close of this letter I provide some detailed information to you, including the measures we take to create a safe environment and measures patients can take to help provide the same.

We have not wanted to get ahead of the Governor's office in any of our recommendations to you but have most definitely been ensuring your well-being while awaiting the formal recommendations of our governing councils. Last night the Illinois State Dental Society Board of Trustees announced they are keeping in unison with Gov. Pritzker's lead to "flatten the curve of our health care workers and first responders". Beginning tomorrow, Tuesday, March 17<sup>th</sup>, dental practices are "recommended to temporarily" adjust their patient care decisions for the course of two weeks. We will be contacting those patients who are already scheduled on those affected dates and communicating their unique circumstance to them as it pertains to our recommendation. If any patients who are not already scheduled have an emergency need to communicate with us, we will certainly take your phone call and address your needs with you. Any patient who will be seen will first be asked a series of simple questions in order to gain valuable information about their health, travel, and exposure. Likewise, patients will be asked to call upon arrival in order to bypass the usual routine of the waiting room. In the interest of "flattening the curve", the ISDS is also contributing to the medical community's effort to preserve the overall limited supply of personal protective equipment in the event it is needed for emergent care. Please rest assured that this decision is based upon prevention which is an oath we keep to one another as members of the medical community and to every person under our care. **There has been no known case of COVID-19 virus passing within a dental practice.**

### Our Precautionary Measures

We always wear single-use gloves and masks along with eye protection during procedures to protect both you as my patient and us as your provider. Our dental equipment is either single-use disposable or sterilized in a traditional FDA approved autoclave according to medical standards. All work surfaces or items that may be touched throughout the procedure are cleaned with a high-quality disinfectant which kills spores, bacteria, and viruses. This is then followed by the placement of a disposable barrier wrap. And lastly, as always, we thoroughly wash our hands before every patient encounter. We have expanded our regularly disinfected surfaces to include doorknobs, walls, bathroom surfaces, both horizontal and vertical and other various areas of even incidental contact ongoingly throughout each day.

### Recommendations for patients and their families

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick or have symptoms
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw it away
- Clean and disinfect surfaces frequently
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for 20 seconds
- Use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol when soap and water are not available
- Stay home when you are sick
- Be transparent about your health, travel and possible incidents of exposure

During this time, it is my opinion that we have the profound opportunity as a world-wide community to protect one another through prevention. We have all been affected by school closings, university decisions, purchasing behaviors, restaurants, and economic effects of all sorts. In the face of so much concern and personal worry for our own families, I urge you to remember that we are empowered to think of people we will never meet and to be concerned with their protection. Doing so will ultimately protect those closest to us all and minimize the long-term impact on healthcare and places of business and education.

I will serve to protect my patients, their families, my staff, my own family and the greatest ripple effect I can serve. Approaching the end of the temporary, 2-week care adjustment we will connect with you again in order to deliver more information. We look forward to returning to full operation shortly and continue to keep your entire health in mind.

Faithfully,

Dr. Barry Walvoord and Team at Orthodontics by the Lake