

## What to Expect at Your Dental Appointment

To reduce the spread of COVID-19, since March 19, most dental offices in Washington were only open for urgent dental needs. Now, as our state begins to reopen, dental offices are implementing new recommendations for infection control.

All of these changes and precautions are to keep you, your family, and the dental staff safe and healthy. **Here are some questions to help you get ready for your next dental visit.**

### What will be different about my visit?

To keep you safe, all areas of the office will be **cleaned and disinfected frequently**, including the waiting room and exam rooms. Hygiene items, like hand sanitizer and wipes, will also be available.

You'll see certain precautions in place for **physical distancing**. Some offices may ask that you call the front desk when you arrive and wait in your car until they are ready for you. Others have reorganized waiting rooms to keep a six-foot distance.

When you call for an appointment, you'll be asked basic **health screening questions** (see next page) to make sure you are healthy and ready for an appointment.

Dental offices will inform you about the specific steps they are taking to keep you safe. **Here are some additional questions to ask so that you know what to expect.**

- > What should I do when I arrive for my appointment?
- > Do I need to wear a mask or other personal protective equipment, such as gloves?
- > How will the dental appointment be different from previous appointments?
- > Where should I wait while my family member is in their appointment?

## About DentistLink

**DentistLink.org** is a free referral service for anyone in Washington, brought to you by Arcora Foundation, the foundation of Delta Dental of Washington.

Our friendly referral specialists work hard to help connect people to dental care in their community. Open to Apple Health (Medicaid), uninsured, and insured.

**To get connected to a dentist in your area that accepts your insurance, call or text our team at 844-888-5465.**

You can also search for a dentist through the online directory at [DentistLink.org](https://www.dentistlink.org).

## What does it mean to be “screened” before an appointment?

Before your appointment, a dental office staff member will ask you some health screening questions to keep you and other patients safe. When you arrive for your appointment, they will ask these questions again, along with taking your temperature.

### Example screening questions

- > Do you have a fever, or have you felt hot/feverish lately?
- > Are you having shortness of breath or other breathing difficulties?
- > Do you have a cough?
- > Do you have any flu-like symptoms, such as digestive issues, headache, or fatigue?
- > Are you experiencing any other symptoms that we should know about?
- > Are you in contact with any confirmed COVID-19 positive patients?
- > Are you over age 60?
- > Do you have heart, lung or kidney disease, diabetes, or any autoimmune disease?

If you answer “yes” to one or more of these questions the dentist or office staff will have a deeper discussion with you before proceeding with the appointment. As always, if you are feeling unwell, for the safety of yourself, staff, and others, it is best to stay home and schedule your appointment for another time.

## What additional safety precautions will be taken?

All dental professionals will be wearing masks, gloves, and other approved personal protective equipment during your appointment. Front desk staff will be wearing masks and/or have a clear safety shield at their desk.

All staff will also refrain from shaking hands or other unnecessary physical contact with patients.

**Dental providers understand that this is a new dental environment, and they are very willing to talk to you in detail about your appointment and answer any questions you may have.**

## How can I take care of my teeth at home?

There are simple and effective ways to make sure your mouth is healthy while at home.

- > Brush your teeth with fluoride toothpaste for two minutes, once in the morning and once at night
- > Floss once a day
- > Avoid sugary beverages and sticky snacks (chips, candy, etc)
- > Drink tap water throughout the day to wash away cavity-causing sugars from your teeth

**If you notice any pain, swelling, or cracked teeth, do not wait to make an appointment. Call or text DentistLink at 844-888-5465 to get connected with urgent dental care.**