

Talking to Parents about the COVID-19 Pandemic



AMERICA'S PEDIATRIC DENTISTS
THE BIG AUTHORITY on little teeth®

The following information is prepared for our patient's families who, understandably, may have questions related to treatment, appointments, dental emergencies and other topics related to the oral health care of their children. During the COVID-19 pandemic, your safety and well-being are our top priority. We hope this guidance is helpful to ensure you feel informed and safe when it comes to your children's oral care.

How has the COVID pandemic impacted pediatric dentists?

- As dental professionals, our main concern is to keep our patients and their loved ones safe and healthy, so we have erred on the side of caution during this difficult time. Limiting pediatric dental offices to emergency procedures has been recommended to us by the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry (AAPD), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), American Dental Association (ADA) and guidance from state and local governments.
- In the meantime, we have stayed up to date with the latest and best information about protecting our patients during the pandemic through online education and extensive review of clinical information. Many of us have donated personal protective equipment to first responders.

What exactly does a dental emergency mean?

- Although there are stay-at-home orders in place in most states, pediatric dentists are still here for your children for dental emergencies. A dental emergency means pain, infection or trauma. If you have a question, or if you think your child may have a dental emergency, please reach out to us right away by calling our office. This [graphic](#) provided by the AAPD can also be helpful to prepare for dental emergencies.

Will your office have enough personal protective equipment (PPE) to ensure both dentists and patient families are safe?

- As the Big Authority on Little Teeth, the AAPD has been working diligently to provide updates on how we can safely reopen our office when the time comes. At this time, the AAPD is working with dental companies to secure personal protective equipment (PPE) for pediatric dentists to help protect patients and their families. Our office may look a little bit different when you visit, but please be reassured that this is to keep everyone safe and healthy.

When will dentists' offices open/is it safe to go back to the dentist?

- Our first responsibility is to our patients. Our next responsibility is to pay attention to the latest guidance from our state and local governments and health departments, as recommended by the CDC, AAPD and ADA. The AAPD has provided a comprehensive safety checklist for pediatric dentists to ensure the safety of our patient families and dental staff in this "new normal" environment.

What will be different about going back to the pediatric dentist?

- Kids will always be messy. At our pediatric dental office, we have always known this and have worked hard to reduce the spread of germs in our office. During this pandemic, we have stepped up our cleaning practices along with our personal protective equipment to keep our patients and our staff safe.
- We will continue to follow social distancing recommendations and also ask that parents/caregivers let us know if you or your child have been sick recently. We will also ask that you wash your hands before entering our office, and for your own safety, wash them after you leave. As always, it is important to remember that our greatest concern is to keep everyone involved healthy before, during and after the visit.

How can I get hold of my pediatric dentist if the office is closed?

- Although our office is closed, we have an emergency line that is always available for dental emergencies.

What advice do you have for keeping my child's teeth healthy while at home?

- Good habits can be hard to keep when your usual routine changes. Although school is out of session, it is important that your children brush for two minutes, twice a day, with fluoridated toothpaste. It is also important to maintain healthy eating habits, including limited snacks each day. Encourage your children to drink water or milk instead of juice, soda or sports drinks as well.

As a parent during these uncertain times, how can I best prepare my child for a pediatric dental visit?

- Our top priority is keeping everyone safe and healthy. If your child or you is not feeling well or has had a fever in the 24 hours before your visit, please stay home and re-schedule your appointment.
- You can expect a pre-screening call the day before your appointment, and everyone will likely have their temperature checked when they arrive.
- Consider wearing a mask to cover your nose and mouth and please wash your and your children's hands before and after visiting our office to prevent the spread of germs.
- Let your child know that even though the office, pediatric dentist and staff may look a bit different, we are still the same inside. We continue to provide the highest quality of care possible while keeping your child safe and comfortable during the dental visit.

Is it really necessary to bring my child in for his/her regular cleaning appointments? Couldn't I wait another 3 or 6 months?

- Now more than ever, we want our patient's families to know that dental care for children is a medical necessity. Although we may not be able to see your child in our office right now, it is important to keep up healthy habits at home and to reschedule your visit with us as soon as we reopen.
- We appreciate and understand our parents' concerns about the risks involved with resuming health care, so if you have any questions at all about your child's need for a check up, please call or e-mail us to we can discuss your child's needs and your concerns.

If you have any concerns, we would love for you to share your feedback with us. During these challenging times, we want to communicate with our patient's families often to ensure they are feeling safe and getting their questions answered. Please visit www.mychildrensteeth.org for valuable resources to ensure healthy oral health.



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