



Questions and Answers about COVID-19

This patient information is provided by the BC Dental Association (BCDA) based on information and direction from the Provincial Health Officer and the College of Dental Surgeons of BC (College). See the dental College COVID-19 information page at [covid-19-public \(cdsbc.org\)](https://covid-19-public.cdsbc.org)

1 Is it safe for me to visit my dental office?

There is no evidence of increased risk of transmission of COVID-19 from dental care. Dentists follow [Infection-Prevention-and-Control-Guidelines.pdf \(cdsbc.org\)](https://covid-19-public.cdsbc.org) as a regular course of practice. With the current situation, there are additional steps being taken; therefore, your visit may be slightly different than before the pandemic. [‘What to expect when visiting a dental office during Phase 2 and 3 of BC’s response to the COVID-19 pandemic’](#) is a great resource.

2 How do dentists ensure that patients are protected from infection?

Dental clinics are like mini-hospitals and are required to follow strict infection and exposure controls on an ongoing basis. Dentists comply with [Infection Prevention and Control Guidelines](#) set by the College. BCDA also provides dentists with an Exposure Control Plan, outlining the requirements for PPE as a standard practice for managing all patients – **all the time**. This includes the use of gloves, masks and face shields or eyewear to keep both the practitioner and the patient safe.

Note: PPE is in **very short supply**, as available PPE is currently directed at urgent medical services. At this time, if a dental office does not have the required PPE to treat you, they will need to defer your care.

3 What do I need to do differently now when visiting the dental office?

Prior to your appointment, your dental office will be conducting a screening, either by telephone or an emailed form. The screening may include questions about your

health, medical history, social history, recent travel outside of Canada and specific questions related to symptoms of COVID-19.

When you arrive, you may be asked to wait outside or in your car until your appointment time. You are required to wear a mask and keep physically distant while in the reception area and other common patient areas. The screening questions you answered previously may be asked again. Relatives and friends may not accompany you in the dental office. You may be asked to follow a specific route in and out of the dental office in order to maintain physical distancing.

4 What should I do if I think I have COVID-19?

The Public Health Agency of Canada provides instructions for the steps you should take in a fact sheet: [Coronavirus disease \(COVID-19\): How to isolate at home when you have COVID-19](#). A new COVID-19 assessment tool and support app is also available at covid19.thrive.health/.

5 Where can I get answers to my questions about COVID-19?

British Columbians can reach service representatives seven days a week, from 7:30 am to 8 pm, by calling **1-888-COVID19**. Information is available in more than 110 languages.

6 What’s the difference between “self-isolate”, “self-monitor” and “quarantine”?

Refer to a very helpful resource from the Public Health Agency of Canada: [Know the Difference: Self-monitoring, self-isolation, and isolation for COVID-19](#).