

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has recommendations for dental office infection control. Dr. Latner and the team at Westside Dental Associates are always focused on your safety and work hard to prevent the spread of infection, which is why we have consistently practiced under the strict guidelines of “universal precautions” introduced in 1985, the year of our founding– assuming every patient is infected with the most aggressive disease possible – since our inception. This means we do everything possible every day, for every patient, and staff member to prevent the spread of infectious disease.

What does all of this mean on a day to day basis? Before you enter the examining room, all surfaces, such as the dental chair, dental light, drawer handles, keyboard, mouse and countertops, have been meticulously cleaned and disinfected. We routinely drape chairs and other surfaces with plastic coverings, which are replaced after each patient.

Non-disposable items such as dental instruments are always cleaned and sterilized between patients and undergo a strict protocol, in sync with the rigid principles of universal precautions. Disposable dental instruments and needles are never reused. Infection control precautions also require all dental staff involved in patient care to use appropriate protective equipment such as gloves, masks, and eyewear when needed. After each patient, disposable items are discarded before seeing the next patient, everyone in the treatment team washes their hands and puts on a new pair of gloves. If they plan to leave the treatment room for any reason, they remove their gloves and dispose of them immediately within the room.

What about the new Coronavirus?

Please know that the precautions our team already takes every day to prevent the spread of infection in our practice also help prevent the spread of COVID-19. However, to step up our game during these extremely challenging times we want to share our recently established guidelines.

1. All patients and visitors will be asked if they have traveled outside of the country since December 2019 or have been in contact with someone who has. If so, a more involved discussion will take place in an isolated area, as to their relative risk of hosting the virus.
2. Patients who are ill and experiencing flu-like symptoms, respiratory illness & a cough or fever will be required to postpone visits and elective dental procedure visits. Such patients will be encouraged to seek medical attention.
3. When coming to your appointment, and you arrive early, you can wait in your car in the parking lot. Just call our office at 310 477-1081 and tell us you’ve arrived. We will call you when we are ready to seat you, thus minimizing your time in our reception room.
4. As an extra precaution, the office is continuously being disinfected throughout the day, and again will be disinfected at the end of each day.
5. Hand sanitizer will be placed at the front desk. Employees will encourage patients to use the hand sanitizer and/or encourage adequate hand hygiene practices.

If you are healthy, there's no reason to cancel your regularly scheduled dental appointment.

Here are a few things that you may already be aware of that you can do on your own to help keep yourself and those around you healthy:

- Wash your hands frequently, or use a hand sanitizer with at least 60% ethyl alcohol.
- Avoid touching your face, eyes or nose to reduce the spread of germs.
- Cover your cough with a fabric or sneeze into your elbow. Infections like the coronavirus spread through the tiny droplets in coughs and sneezes.
- Stay home if you feel sick. If you have flu-like symptoms or otherwise feel unwell, stay home, call your physician, and rest.