

**Interim VDH Dental Health Program RDH Guidance during COVID-19 Pandemic to Comply with CDC  
and VDH Infection Control Recommendations and Virginia DOLI Regulations  
(All Dental Staff are required to complete the DOLI "Safe at Work" TRAIN Course #1093084 )**

**(9/9/2020)**

**WIC Clinics:**

Local Health Districts will determine when it is appropriate to resume "live" patient interaction for WIC services in clinic settings. At that time, hygienists can work with the District staff managing WIC client visits to resume our preventive services in compliance with the current standard of care from the [Centers for Disease Control Dental Covid-19](#) and [Virginia Department of Health Dental Covid-19](#) guidance for providing elective non-aerosol generating dental procedures that are not urgent. It will be incumbent on each hygienist to assess the physical environment in which they are to serve clients and to determine if care can be provided safely both for patients and staff. Dr. Browder and other Dental Program staff will be available to consult with you as needed. Before initiating any direct client clinic services please follow the guidance below.

1. Self-assess each day ([see VDH Guidance](#)) for symptoms such as cough, shortness of breath, respiratory illness, diarrhea or temperature above 100 degrees and stay home when indicated. Follow up with your healthcare provider.
2. Assure WIC staff has complied with the VDH guidance for patient management including patient health assessment (including attending guardians/family members), age appropriate source control using face coverings, minimizing person to person contact by limiting those accompanying a child visit and following CDC recommendations for cleaning and disinfecting the environment appropriate to the service.
3. Use appropriate PPE for an assessment and varnish application service visit to include a level 2 or 3 facemask, goggles or face shield, gloves and a long sleeve barrier garment over street clothes.
4. Be certain anyone accompanying or holding the infant is meticulous about wearing their face covering during your time with them.
5. Avoid shared items among patients such as visual aids for demonstrations.
6. When at all possible handle paperwork away from the clinical setting.
7. Always be attentive to hand hygiene guidance.

### **Community Activities:**

Although clinical hygiene activity is curtailed during the pandemic, some hygienists have expressed interest in resuming community oral health education activities. It is certainly understandable and appreciated that you are anxious to resume your oral health disease prevention practices. However, regarding "live" presentations in the community we recommend you consult with your local Health Director. Our VDH dental health programs will reflect on the local District and each community must assess whether the environment is safe and the appearance of congregating an audience is acceptable. There seems to be wide variability in the State regarding disease activity. The VDH guidance, [VDH Community Settings Guide](#) for many activities in schools and daycare advises considering the corona virus status in the community. Our education sessions, although important and valuable, are not essential. If you and the Health Director consider community sessions are reasonable in the local environment, you must take the following steps to protect yourself and those exposed to you.

1. Review the CDC guidance for school settings:

[https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-day-camps.html?deliveryName=USCDC\\_2067-DM29601](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-day-camps.html?deliveryName=USCDC_2067-DM29601)

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/index.html>

2. Confirm the facility is in compliance with recommendations before scheduling.
3. In public, protect yourself and others as advised in the CDC link above under "Prevent Getting Sick"
4. Self-assess each day ([see VDH Guidance](#)) for symptoms such as cough, shortness of breath, respiratory illness, diarrhea or temperature above 100 degrees and stay home when indicated. Follow up with your healthcare provider.

### **School Based Clinical Programs:**

Resuming our clinical preventive programs in schools during Covid-19 pandemic must be a local decision made in conjunction with the local Health Director based on your community infection status. If it is determined that VDH clinical hygiene services can be initiated in individual schools and provided safely for all involved under the current Covid-19 State and federal guidance, then you may begin scheduling your sites. As you know there will be a lot of coordination required with schools and school nurses to assure our protocols can be followed and our physical facility requirements can be met. Our clinical protocols will change from prior years as we have discussed. All assistants and hygienists are reminded you must be familiar with the [CDC Infection Control Recommendations](#) which always apply to our work cleaning and disinfection procedures, as well as the current guidance for dental care during Covid-19 from [Centers for Disease Control Dental Covid-19](#) and [Virginia Department of Health Dental Covid-19](#) . In the Covid-19 environment prior to initiating clinical programs, the Dental Health Program will utilize the ADA Covid-19 Hazard Assessment to assess preparedness for minimizing risk.

**Clinical Protocols:** During the Covid-19 pandemic, our clinical programs will eliminate aerosol generating procedures (AGP). Slow speed handpieces will not be used in school based programs. Three way air/water syringes are only to be used to provide water, if it is needed. Do not use air/water spray. Removing debris from teeth and drying will be performed manually using cotton rolls or cotton pellets. Do not use compressed air for visual assessments. Gentle explorer use is acceptable. Use the high volume evacuator when suction is required rather than the saliva ejector. Topical fluoride varnish application may proceed as in the past following this guidance. Prophylaxis services will be limited to those patients requiring removal of visible stains and calculus, using hand instruments only. In the Covid-19 environment glass ionomer cement sealants such as Fuji Automix light cured will be placed, rather than bonded resins such as Clinpro. Resin sealants have many favorable properties for a school program and their use may resume in the future.

**Dental Staff Management:** Self-assess each day ([see VDH Guidance](#)) for symptoms such as cough, shortness of breath, respiratory illness, diarrhea or temperature above 100 degrees F and stay home when indicated. Follow up with your healthcare provider. Log recorded temperatures for dental staff on clinical care days and save records.

**Patient Management:** Assure school nurse keeps you informed of Covid-19 status in schools. Defer care as appropriate for children with suspected infection. Limit activity to one child at a time wearing school required face covering. Assess child for symptoms including gastrointestinal issues and other respiratory conditions that may promote coughing/gagging during care. Record patient temperature scan on patient record. (Assure parent is advised this will be performed as a screening modality if it is not in school protocols). Have child sanitize hands at dismissal from chair and wear appropriate face covering to classroom per school guidance.

**Facility Considerations:** Child's waiting chair (if necessary) properly distanced from treatment area. Maintain six feet between chairs, if more than one child must be present, and disinfect between patients. No shared items provided to child.

**Equipment Considerations:** Assure equipment is in good working order for services to proceed efficiently. Test water quality annually and record results. Use barriers when disinfection is prohibitive including multi-use dispensing devices.

**Administrative and Work Practice Controls:** Only individual treatment items required for a patient are in the treatment area. Back up supplies and materials are separated from the treatment area or stored in containers during care or at a minimum, covered. Our treatment protocols will avoid use of aerosol generating procedures and instruments. If toothbrushes are distributed there are to stay sealed while at school.

**Engineering Controls:** Work in adequately ventilated areas and optimize air flow from HVAC systems. If possible, take advantage of fresh air sources in the work area and consider positioning of work space for best airflow.

Source Control: In addition to wearing facemasks while working, use some type of face covering (cloth etc.) at all other times in the school. Wash or sanitize hands before and after gloving. Wear PPE for all facility cleaning/disinfection procedures including packing up at day's end.

PPE: For all patient care, follow proper ["Don and Doff"](#) procedures for PPE. For non-aerosol generating procedures in schools wear a level 2 or 3 surgical mask with goggles or face shield. Personal eyeglasses are not adequate. Use disposable gowns or long sleeve fabric outer garments that do not leave the treatment area unless bagged for cleaning transport.

Disease Management. If you suspect you have been exposed to, or may have inadvertently exposed others to the Covid-19 coronavirus, immediately contact your affiliated local Health Department for directions on how to best manage this event and notify your supervisor.