



16 March 2020

Dear Registrant

As a key healthcare professional and a resident of Ireland, it is important to keep up to date with current advice to support your patients and to remain healthy in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic. We are currently in the delay phase and advice is subject to change.

Dentists' primary obligation now is to ensure their own health, the health and wellbeing of their staff and to protect their patients, consistent with the Dental Council's codes of practice. It is important that you keep abreast of guidance from the National Public Health Emergency Team (NPHE) and the Health Protection Surveillance Centre (HPSC) as the management of the situation evolves. Regularly updated information is provided on the websites of the Department of Health (www.health.gov.ie), the HPSC (www.hpsc.ie) and the HSE (www.hse.ie).

For clarity, the HPSC has advised that dental practices can remain open and there is currently no need for change in practice. However, if a patient is showing symptoms of Covid-19, [The main symptoms are cough; difficulty breathing; fever (high temperature) or chills] or if you have any concerns in this regard, any essential dental care should be considered only after consultation with the patient's GP and/or assigned physician and/or as advised by a public health official. No dental professional is expected to take such a decision without the support of medical colleagues.

The HPSC have specifically advised the Department of Health that the guidance to be followed for dentists is "**Interim guidance for healthcare professionals in relation to the management of individuals with suspected Covid-19 infection presenting to community health care settings other than general practice**". The HPSC has highlighted the importance of (i) Environmental Cleaning/Disinfection and (ii) Cleaning of communal areas. See **weblink www.hpsc.ie/az/respiratory/coronavirus/novelcoronavirus/guidance/infectionpreventionandcontrolguidance**. Be mindful that this guidance may be subject to ongoing updates. Responses to your recent questions are attached.

As an essential healthcare professional, you will continue to have an important role in providing care and services during this public health emergency. We in the Department of Health thank you for your continuing support and dedication.

Yours sincerely

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