



Statement from the Canadian Dental Hygienists Association on the Safety of Non-Essential Dental Procedures

August 14, 2020—Ottawa, ON

On August 3, the World Health Organization (WHO) advised that “routine non-essential oral health care—which usually includes oral health check-ups, dental cleanings and preventive care—be delayed until there has been sufficient reduction in COVID-19 transmission rates from community transmission to cluster cases or according to official recommendations at national, sub-national or local level.”¹

Canadian oral health care professionals adhere to strict infection prevention and control protocols. These protocols were updated and enhanced at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. As provinces began to allow dental and dental hygiene offices to reopen in early May, careful consideration was given to the number of active COVID-19 cases in each province and the risks associated with aerosol-generating procedures. Detailed guidelines for the provision of oral health care services were developed by each provincial regulatory body.

CDHA President Leanne Huvenaars reminds us that “Oral health is essential to overall health. Oral diseases can cause pain, discomfort, difficulties chewing and swallowing, and are also associated with heart and lung diseases, diabetes, and stroke. Professional dental hygiene services, coupled with good daily oral hygiene habits, can reduce the risk of these health complications and should continue during the pandemic.”

With the ongoing evaluation of active cases of COVID-19 in each community, the appropriate use of PPE, screening of clients, and physical distancing, dental hygienists can continue to provide safe and effective oral care to Canadians.

¹ https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/333625/WHO-2019-nCoV-Oral_health-2020.1-eng.pdf
(retrieved August 13, 2020)