



## **SUGGESTED “BEST PRACTICE” ADDED SAFETY GUIDELINES RETURNING TO BUSINESS**

As businesses, your top priority always is to protect the health and safety of your patients, and employees. Given the current circumstance of the coronavirus pandemic, OSHA and CDC compliance is crucial to preventing the spread of COVID-19. Health officials have already warned the public that COVID-19 concerns will be around for a while, upwards of another year or longer.

**Here are some “Best Practice” safety measures as you begin to plan your return to business.**

### **1. Temperature Checks**

Make sure you and your team members check your temperatures daily.

### **2. Reduction and Elimination of Aerosol**

Use an Isolite or Dryshield system. These systems serve multiple purposes, including a continuous dual suction to reduce humidity, and a tongue and cheek retractor. This hands-free device allows you to achieve better visibility when accessing a tooth, provides better moisture control than a suction or rubber dam, and is faster and safer by eliminating airborne particles (aerosol). Its manufacturers have proven data that proves its aerosol elimination. It's a small price to pay for precision, and safety! (no need for bulky over the patient machines that can create even more fear) Contact [matt@dryshield.com](mailto:matt@dryshield.com) for more information.

### **3. Add Air Scrubbers to Your Practice**

We aren't talking about any ole air purifier that you could purchase at your local home improvement store. Instead, we are referring to sophisticated technology, such as [Aerus Solutions air scrubbers](#) that can be professionally installed throughout your office. Unlike air purifiers most people purchase for their homes, these air scrubbers remove not only common allergens and dust particles, but also eliminate harmful contaminants that may exacerbate asthma, and other lung diseases. This technology is proven to remove VOCs, bacteria and viruses (flu, MRSA, and E. coli), and also reduces the number of sick days used by staff because everyone will breath *clean* air every day. The cost for a whole office installation is about \$2,500, which, considering what it costs to pay a fill-in hygienist or assistant, the investment is well worth the money.

### **4. Face Shields**

Wearing proper PPE is essential, and always has been, even before the days of COVID-19. BIO-MASK.com (877.882.8774) offers face shields that are comfortable and convenient for your loops and headlamps. These are wipeable and reusable.

### **5. Hands-Free Check-ins**

Weeks of social distancing and hands-free options everywhere we turn will forever change our future interactions with one another. What was once common practice, having patients check in by signing their name on paper with a pen, should be reinvented for the safety of your team, and your patients. Technology these days make hands-free check-ins much easier. Your dental practice software has available options within it as well as many of your patient communication software. Text upon arrival options work well.

### **6. Waiting Room**

Nearly everyone has a smartphone with Internet access these days. Older generations may be accustomed to skimming through magazines or books sitting in your waiting area, however these items harbor and spread germs. Once you reopen your practice, consider removing printed materials from your practice. Your practice likely already has Wi-Fi, so you could consider offering free Wi-Fi for your patients. Post the Wi-Fi password in a highly visible area, perhaps in a frame on the wall where it will not need to be touched. Other options that have been thought of are: Removal of chairs for a period of time to reduce items being touched, removal of coffee bar. (give them their coffee to go at the end of the appointment.)

### **7. Waitless Waiting Room Option**

Speaking of the waiting room, consider opting for a “waitless” waiting room where patients are asked to remain in their vehicles before their appointment. The front office can call or text the patient when it is time to call them back. (create an appointment indicator in your software that alerts the team that your patient is arrived and waiting in car) This doesn't necessarily have to be a requirement however, you may want to offer it as an option for those that may be concerned about catching germs or becoming sick.

### **8. Reschedule High-Risk Patients for 30-60 Days After You Return**

When reopening your practice following the COVID-19 shutdown, consider scheduling your high-risk patients seeking elective procedures for at least 30 -60 days after your return. Removing these procedures for high-risk individuals helps reduce their risk of being exposed to any lingering cases of COVID-19, also allows your team to get fluid in their “new normal”.

### **9. Pre-Rinse for Patients**

A this time, the [CDC and ADA](#) recommend having patients rinse their mouth with hydrogen peroxide solution of at least .5%. Peroxide that can be purchased in stores is 2%, so it would need to be diluted before using as a mouth rinse. However, there are mouth rinses available for purchase with 1.5% peroxide, CloSYS, Colgate Proxyl, and Listerine Whitening Mouth rinse. Patients should rinse with the solution for 30 seconds. Ozone water rinses is also be effective, although the CDC and ADA have not backed any claims on its effectiveness against COVID-19. (if you are interested in installing a unit, runs about 5k and is a long term benefit for practice and patient)

### **10. N95 Masks for All Team Members**

The COVID-19 pandemic has shown us all that our country, and many parts of the world, lack enough PPE, which include N95 masks. You and your team are on the front lines every day. Bacteria and viruses swirl around the air every time a dental procedure is performed using your handpiece. Masks are most effective when they fit properly. A long-term solution that is cost effective would be a printed N95 mask for each team member (reusable and you change your own filter) You can print your own if you have access to a 3D printer or you can purchase. Premier Dental Arts is custom printing masks along with many other dental labs across the country. Billy@premierdentalarts.net

### **11. Air Hugs and High Fives**

It's not time to get back to shaking hands and hugging just yet. Consider hanging on to the air hugs and air high fives. We can find other ways to be personable with our patients. We will always have excellent customer service and we will still be known for being the same great business we have always been... without the hugs and handshakes. (add some eye contact to your air hugs and you will keep your patient relationships intact)

### **12. Disposable Gowns**

We are already wearing lab coats and leaving our scrubs and shoes at work. (if you are not, now is the time to implement this action.) The disposable gown will add an additional layer of protective barrier. Some will add into their PPE plan and others will continue on what they have done in the past and work on the other areas to increase additional protection.

### **13. Hand Sanitizer**

Well hand sanitizer everywhere in the office is the 'new normal' make it available. (Go ahead and look for some cute branded hand sanitizers with your company information all over it for future marketing.)

### **14. Update Health History**

Each time a patient enters your office should update their health history. Add in these additional questions to the health history form.

- Do you currently have any of these symptoms (circle all that apply): Fever, cough, chest tightness
- Have you ever tested positive for COVID-19?
- Have you traveled outside the United States within the past 14 days? If so, where?

### **15. Street Clothes**

Follow OSHA safety measures with leaving scrubs and shoes at work. Have your team wear their street clothes in and out of work. Launder all scrubs and jackets onsite. Ensure you have a designated biohazard hamper available for all soiled items to be placed in.

### **16. Plastic Protective Covers**

Plastic sleeves on all air/H2O syringes, full length chair covers and don't forget your covers on light handles and keyboards.

### **17. Mail**

You can place a box at the front office for mail man to drop mail into. Mail can stay there for 24 hours before opened (that's how long coronavirus can survive on the mail.)

### **18. Delivery Packages**

Spray your boxes with Birax. Wear masks and gloves when opening boxes

### **19. Sterilization**

When working in sterilization area a mask and usage of proper gloves are required and lid on ultrasonic at all times. Do not add instruments to already running cycle. Take the CDC recommendations for handpiece motor sterilization as well as hygiene handpieces.

### **20. Safe in your Rooms**

Stay in your rooms with your patients. Using your in-office communication system (radios) is the most important now. It's going to be wasteful and nearly impossible to get up in the middle of procedures. Some tips to consider:

- Doctors numb and stay with your patient. This is your time to reconnect with them. (many of you already do this)
- Team ensure your rooms are properly set up for all potential treatment. (review your charts and plan ahead)
- Get your hygiene checks done before your enter treatment rooms or when treatment is completed.
- Plan your day out at your morning huddle "what to expect"

These are recommendations for "best practice' Whatever you choose to do as added safety measures on top of OSHA requirements and CDC recommendations for your business. It is time to:

- Get an action plan together
- Order your supplies
- Create a video of your expectations and share with your team while are preparing to return to work.
- Finally create a video for social media and prepare your patients for the steps your taking to prepare for business to resume. You want them to know what you are doing to keep your team safe and them safe.