

Coronavirus (COVID-19) and Fear of Pediatric Dental Treatment

Karimi M*

Department of Pediatrics Dentistry, Sepideh Dental Clinic, Iran

***Corresponding Author:** Karimi M, Department of Pediatrics Dentistry, Sepideh Dental Clinic, Iran.

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Recently, the concern of the Coronavirus in dentistry is one of the challenges that the majority of parents are facing. The outbreak of Coronavirus (COVID-19) seems to have a great impact on the parents where if there is a need for the emergency dental treatment, they prefer to stay home and use a home remedy to relieve children's dental pain instead of referring to dental offices or clinics. However, with the application of standard precautions and protocols consistently, there is nothing to worry about.

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses that are common in both animals and people which can cause the common cold or other severe illnesses, such as SARS and MERS. For Novel Coronavirus, there are currently no vaccines or specific treatments except supportive care. Therefore, Infection control plays an equally important role in the practice of dentistry as do an understanding of oral manifestations and the diagnosis and management of viral infections. An abnormally elevated temperature is a clear indication for postponing of the dental treatment for the patient concerned.

If urgent dental treatment is necessary, dental personnel and medical providers should work together closely to determine the appropriate precautions and decide whether the dental facility is fully equipped with the appropriate setting to provide the necessary services to the potentially infectious patient. In case of a lack of the appropriate dental equipment and facilities, the dental procedures are highly recommended in hospitals and other ambulatory care settings.

Dr. Maria Geisinger, chair of the ADA Council on Scientific Affairs said: "The use of standard precautions within the dental workplace and acquiring a thorough history of symptoms and potential exposure for patients is critical for dental health care professionals to maintain a healthy working environment, whether the concern is flu, COVID-19 or other transmissible illnesses", She also emphasized: " Postponing non-emergent dental care in individuals who are ill and proper referral for diagnosis of suspected cases of transmissible illness is a critical role that the dentist can play in reducing the spread of these dangerous diseases".

As the CDC also recommends, I believe during this epidemic viral infection season, besides receiving the flu vaccine and using standard precautions (such as hand-washing, surface disinfection, and appropriate use of personal protective equipment consisting of gloves, gowns, respiratory protection, and eye protection), taking the antiviral drug should be mandatory for all dental personnel especially that one who is in contact with infected patients. The dental personnel who are having a flu-like illness have to stay at home until full recovery.

To help prevent the transmission of all respiratory infections, dental practices should adhere to infection control measures and protocols. Offices have to also follow routine cleaning and disinfection strategies used during flu season all the time. The ADA's Oral Health Topics page can provide additional information on infection controls in dentistry.

The last word, considering the unique work environment of dentists, which Involves close patient contact and aerosol production, the risk of transmission from an infected patient is high. Children are not the exception and are also prone to this infection. Consequently, as the number of COVID-19 cases may increase in the future, pediatric dentists should be well informed and educated about not only the

signs and symptoms of the condition but also how to follow strict infection control measures in these cases. Furthermore, offices would also follow routine cleaning and disinfection strategies for children's sakes. On the other hand, parents need to be reassured that the pediatric dentists use all the necessary precautions (dental consideration and infection control protocols) to avoid any viral infections. Another important point is that the dentist should reduce stress in parents and children and create a relaxed and anxiety-free environment.

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