

Dear valued patient:

In an effort to support national efforts to fight the COVID- 19 pandemic, our practice is taking the following steps to help assure your health and well-being and that of our community:

- We are following directives from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), American Dental Society ADA, and Massachusetts Dental Society (MDS) as a way to limit patient and staff exposure to this virus.
- Your health, and the health of our dedicated staff, matters to us, so going forward we will suspend all non-emergency care for until April 6th.
- Patients will be seen only for urgent and emergency dental needs.

We will contact you soon to reschedule routine hygiene appointments. If you are already scheduled for an urgent issue, we will contact you the day before your appointment to discuss your health status, health screening protocols and confirm whether the appointment should be kept. Of course, please call us right away if you have a dental emergency or need immediate care.

The safety and well-being of our patients continues to be our primary concern. We will continue to monitor the status of COVID-19 nationally and within our community and keep you up-to-date regarding our plans to reopen for business as usual.

I urge you to contact us if you have any questions or concerns. We can be reached by phone at 508-753-5444 or by email to [admin@handsmanperio.com](mailto:admin@handsmanperio.com) and will respond as soon as we can.

Thank you,

David B. Handsman DMD, MDS  
Diplomate, American Board of Periodontics

# What Constitutes a Dental Emergency?

The ADA recognizes that state governments and state dental associations may be best positioned to recommend to the dentists in their regions the amount of time to keep their offices closed to all but emergency care. This is fluid situation and those closest to the issue may best understand the local challenges being faced.

## DENTAL EMERGENCY

This guidance may change as the COVID-19 pandemic progresses. Dentists should use their professional judgment in determining a patient's need for urgent or emergency care.

**Dental emergencies** are potentially life threatening and require immediate treatment to stop ongoing tissue bleeding, alleviate severe pain or infection, and include:

- Uncontrolled bleeding
- Cellulitis or a diffuse soft tissue bacterial infection with intra-oral or extra-oral swelling that potentially compromise the patient's airway
- Trauma involving facial bones, potentially compromising the patient's airway

**Urgent dental care** focuses on the management of conditions that require immediate attention **to relieve severe pain and/or risk of infection and to alleviate the burden on hospital emergency departments. These should be treated as minimally invasively as possible.**

- Severe dental pain from pulpal inflammation
- Pericoronitis or third-molar pain
- Surgical post-operative osteitis, dry socket dressing changes
- Abscess, or localized bacterial infection resulting in localized pain and swelling
- Tooth fracture resulting in pain or causing soft tissue trauma
- Dental trauma with avulsion/luxation
- Dental treatment required prior to critical medical procedures
- Final crown/bridge cementation if the temporary restoration is lost, broken or causing gingival irritation
- Biopsy of abnormal tissue

**Other urgent dental care:**

- Extensive dental caries or defective restorations causing pain
  - Manage with interim restorative techniques when possible (silver diamine fluoride, glass ionomers)
- Suture removal
- Denture adjustment on radiation/oncology patients
- Denture adjustments or repairs when function impeded
- Replacing temporary filling on endo access openings in patients experiencing pain
- Snipping or adjustment of an orthodontic wire or appliances piercing or ulcerating the oral mucosa

## DENTAL NON EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

**Routine or non-urgent dental procedures includes but are not limited to:**

- Initial or periodic oral examinations and recall visits, including routine radiographs
- Routine dental cleaning and preventive therapies
- Orthodontic procedures other than those to address acute issues (e.g. pain, infection, trauma)
- Extraction of asymptomatic teeth
- Restorative dentistry including treatment of asymptomatic carious lesions
- Aesthetic dental procedures