



Oral Health Care & COVID-19

The UF College of Dentistry includes about 1,000 faculty, staff, residents and students who work/study in our Gainesville, St. Petersburg, Hialeah, Naples and Wildlight facilities.

Delivering Oral Health Care Safely

Dentistry has long been at the forefront of implementing infection control, environmental and other safety measures due to the close contact dental providers have with patients as well as the types of procedures performed in dentistry, which, by their nature, produce aerosols.

In March, the UF College of Dentistry began making changes to our dental operatories and other spaces adding air cleaning/filtering equipment, installing more high volume evacuation devices, changing patient scheduling to eliminate crowding, and creating physical barriers. In addition, we added new PPE requirements for our entire dental care team to wear during dental appointments to protect everyone involved.

Between appointments all surfaces are disinfected and equipment is sterilized, which is a long-standing practice in dental offices across the country; however, with the advent of COVID-19, we added more time between appointments to be able to clean and disinfect even more thoroughly.

We conduct temperature checks on all employees daily and screen patients the day of, and the day prior to, their dental visit. We provide physical distancing in our clinical and patient waiting areas. Since early April, the college implemented a mandatory masking/face covering rule that everyone – employees, patients and visitors alike – must follow when inside our dental buildings.

In essence, we treat every oral health care interaction with the idea that someone involved may be positive for COVID-19 or another transmissible illness and we use all tools at our disposal to deliver care as safe as possible for our providers and patients.

If a Member of our College Tests Positive for COVID-19

Since mid-March a very small number of people in our college have tested COVID-19 positive. When we are notified, we alert UF Health Screen, Test & Protect so our public health experts can guide the response as part of the program outlined here.

The UF Health Screen, Test & Protect team works with the individual who tested positive and in coordination with the Department of Health, launches a contact tracing process to determine who else needs to be notified, isolated and tested as a result of their interactions with that individual.

In addition, out of an abundance of caution, UFCD decided early on to notify patients if a member of the dental team that provided care to them tests positive, even if this is not required as part of contact tracing. We also notify individuals that are part of the same dental health care team as a positive person.

It is important to note that we are not aware of any situation where one of our patients or a dental team member contracted COVID-19 during direct dental patient care — the use of personal protective equipment, or PPE, and other practices and safeguards have proven effective at protecting everyone involved.

We take pride in providing continued high-quality care as safe as possible to our entire patient community in all of our locations.

COVID-19 Resources

[UFCD COVID-19 Website](#)
[Centers for Disease Control](#)
[UF Health Screen, Test & Protect](#)
[American Dental Association](#)
[Florida Department of Health](#)