



Oral and maxillofacial surgeons:
The experts in face, mouth and
jaw surgery®

The Reopening Challenge:

Sample Staff/Patient Conversations Related to Elective OMS Procedures

The following sample conversations are intended to provide the necessary information related to elective procedures for staff to clearly and accurately relay to patients. Some information about these sample scripts:

- Each practice should review and customize these scripts prior to implementation.
- These scripts do not need to be recited verbatim. They are intended to help in the preparation and training of office staff – better equipping them with the knowledge to communicate with patients naturally.
- There is some duplication to allow for a greater variety of sample choices.
- Some of the replies may seem quite long. This is partly due to the extensive amount of information that is often required to answer a seemingly simple question.
- For any liability or legal advice, please consult your attorney and/or malpractice carrier.
- As the course of the COVID-19 pandemic is frequently changing, it is the individual surgeon's responsibility to confirm the relevance and contemporaneous accuracy of the information his or her staff is providing to patients.

STAFF

Thank you for calling Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery, how may I help you?

PATIENT

I have been waiting to bring my child in for a wisdom tooth surgery consultation. I thought you were closed for these last few weeks so I didn't call. Have you been open?

STAFF

Yes, we have been open but limited to treating dental emergencies such as severe infections, bleeding and broken jaws. This was in compliance with the guidelines from the American Dental Association and the executive order from the governor.

PATIENT

I am still anxious about bringing my teen into a dental or medical office setting because of COVID-19. What options do we have?

STAFF

Our practice offers several options to decrease your contact with other patients. First, we offer online registration so you take your time at home to enter all of the needed information.

We also have telehealth/medicine/dentistry consultations where you meet online face-to-face with one of our doctors. The doctor reviews the registration material you completed online and then we schedule an online appointment with you and your child. You will need a flashlight, well-lit room and a functioning online camera. This will allow the doctor to get an idea of what is going on with your child's wisdom teeth.

The doctor will answer as many questions as possible based upon what he/she sees during the meeting. Overall, the teledentistry consultation will decrease the amount of time you are exposed to other patients. This is one of the ways we are trying to decrease exposure in our office.

PATIENT

How does the OMS see the X-rays?
I think it's called a panograph?

STAFF

You are correct the most common X-ray we use is a panograph, or "PAN." Sometimes we use a CBCT – Cone Beam Computed Tomography. Your child's dentist may have taken a PAN or CBCT recently, or perhaps the orthodontist has, and they can give you a copy to show the doctor. If you do not have the necessary X-rays, you will have to come to our office to have a one taken. The consult can be completed at this time and we can answer questions about anesthesia and insurance questions as well.

PATIENT

**Can I bring my other children with me to the appointment?
(Why can't I bring someone else with me to the office?)**

STAFF (option 1)

We have changed the way patient flow is planned so there is minimal contact among patients. To avoid unnecessary contact with others, we would prefer you leave family members home or, if appropriate, they can stay in the car instead of coming into the office.

STAFF (option 2)

To avoid unnecessary contact with others, we would prefer you leave family members home or, if appropriate, they can stay in the car instead of coming into the office. It is easier to provide space for social distancing with fewer people present. One person may accompany a child, or any patient that requires special assistance, into the office.

PATIENT

What should I do when I get to the office?

STAFF

We ask that you call when you arrive so we can recommend when you come into the office in case there has been a back-up of patient flow at that time.

We ask that you wear a mask while inside and that you not enter the office if you have a fever or symptoms of the illness.

PATIENT

Will you provide me with a mask to wear?

STAFF

All types of protective equipment, including masks, are in short supply. This equipment is critical for us to be able to provide care to our patients, and we must use our supply wisely. Please bring your own mask or face covering to use while in the office. (Note: you may want to have some facial coverings or masks available for visitors who do not arrive with their own.)

PATIENT

What are you doing to help prevent the spread of the coronavirus?

STAFF

We are limiting the number of people we allow in the office. We also prescreen patients on the phone with several coronavirus-related symptoms and exposure questions. We are confirming that patients are negative for symptoms of COVID-19 infection for the past two weeks: Do they have a cough, fever or traveled to high-risk areas? (Note: OMSNIC offers a "COVID-19 Pandemic – Patient Disclosures" form for use during the phone screening process.)

We are no longer having the patients sign in at the front desk. We ask them to call when they arrive at the building so we can recommend when they come into the office in case there has been a back-up of patient flow at that time. We are having patients fill out paperwork in the consultation rooms if they were not able to complete it online. We have posted signs at the front desk instructing the patients to wash their hands and use the available hand sanitizer. We have placed "sneeze guards" (clear Plexiglas) between front staff employees and patients.

Our office entry has posted directions about having wearing face coverings and recommending not to enter if you have a fever. The staff will take the temperature of all patients along with any other people who accompany them. All surgical team members are wearing masks (with name badges). Surgical team members are having their temperatures taken daily as well.

The reception area does not have magazines and clutter to make it easier to clean surfaces and prevent transmission of coronavirus by contact with multiple surfaces. We are disinfecting the reception room multiple times a day and – as we have always done – all surgical rooms are disinfected and instruments sterilized before and after use.

For surgical procedures, we are keeping doors closed, wearing disposable gowns, protective eyewear, face shields, hair coverings and N95 masks. We also are having patients rinse with 1.5% hydrogen peroxide for one minute prior to surgical procedures to limit the amount of virus they shed if they have coronavirus without any symptoms.

We have arranged the office to allow for 6-foot distancing between people. We also are paying extra attention to disinfect surfaces such as door handles and guest chairs.

PATIENT

I've heard dental procedures increase the spread of coronavirus. Is that true?

STAFF (option 1)

Dental procedures are done in a part of the body that is likely to have coronavirus present. When drills are used in dentistry, they do create an aerosol mist. If the patient is infected, this mist can contain coronavirus. To decrease the spread of the coronavirus in the dental setting, we have patients rinse with diluted hydrogen peroxide before they sit in the chair for a procedure and we use suction evacuation to vacuum the aerosol mist. When restorations or root canal therapy is performed, a rubber dam barrier is used to isolate only a few teeth and keep the fluids in the throat away from the front of the mouth. In our office, we do not use the rubber dam because we are doing surgery. Our surgical drills do not produce as much of an aerosol spray like a general dentist's drill. Our surgical procedures are completed in a closed room, and these rooms are completely cleaned before and after each procedure.

STAFF (option 2)

Dental procedures are done in a part of the body that is likely to have coronavirus present. When drills are used in dentistry, they create an aerosol mist that may contain coronavirus if working on an infected patient. Oral surgery drills produce less aerosol than a general dentist's drill because they do not use the same type of air-water spray. We use suction devices to vacuum away most of the mist that is created. We may close the doors of the treatment room as well to contain any mist that isn't vacuumed away.

To decrease the risk of spread of the coronavirus we have patients rinse with diluted hydrogen peroxide before a procedure. All instruments are sterilized before they are used on a patient to help prevent the transmission of any disease. Many items are single use and are disposed of after each patient visit.

PATIENT

What if someone in your office has coronavirus?

STAFF

We try to prevent anyone with the coronavirus infection from entering the office by using our patient screening questions and rescheduling them if necessary. Staff members known to have an active illness are not allowed to be in the office. Staff members are screened each day for signs of illness including fever, and we practice frequent hand-washing and sanitization throughout the day. Surgery staff wear protective equipment that decreases the risk of transmission of diseases both to and from the patient.

PATIENT

I have recently been exposed to the coronavirus/have the coronavirus.
Can I come to the office for an appointment?

STAFF

Anyone positive, or at high risk for being positive, for coronavirus infection should not come into the office. We can discuss your situation over the telephone, or use teledentistry, and determine if there is a need for emergency care. If there is an emergency need, the doctor will advise you on the best course of action.

PATIENT

I had surgery in your office recently and now I feel sick, what should I do?
Did you give me coronavirus?

STAFF

Thank you for letting us know. If you feel that you have symptoms of coronavirus infection, call your medical doctor and arrange for the necessary testing if appropriate. If you test positive, please let us know so that we can take the necessary actions.

We aren't aware of any staff members having coronavirus infection, and every precaution was taken to prevent transmission of any disease while you were being treated in our office.