

March 23, 2020

Dear Friends,

As the media coverage of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) continues, I thought you all might like a dentist's perspective. We in dentistry have been handling issues with infectious diseases since HIV became a concern in the 1980s. In fact, our universal precautions are set at the standard to kill tuberculosis – which is much more difficult to contain and destroy than coronavirus. Here are our suggestions:

1. Wash your hands. Bar soap works fine. I sing the Twinkle-Twinkle Little Star song to make sure I wash for the required amount of time. (When you do this you will recognize how long it really takes to have clean hands.)

2. Wash your children's hands. Have them sing too-it makes it more fun!

3. Disinfect your phone twice a day. You can wipe it down with those Lysol wipes. Remember, your phone is ALWAYS on you. It is picking up germs everywhere you set it down and then you put it up to your face.

4. Be reasonable about attending public gatherings. What does this mean? Don't have a toddler birthday party right now. Don't go to a big meeting/ party with lots of people you don't know. However, you still need to live your life! Visit your friends and family. Go to work. Keep your appointments.

5. What if I work with the public? A mask is not going to help you. In fact, it will make things worse. The mask will accumulate germs on the outside and soak through to your face! Why do we wear them in dentistry? We are constantly bombarded with wet spray from the work that we do. That is why we change our masks 10-15-20 times a day. A single mask on my face all day would be a massive hazard to me. Gloves would help you. If you handle money, some disposable gloves would help you – just don't touch your face, wipe your hair, or adjust your glasses with them on. Use them as a reminder NOT to touch your face. Finally, I would recommend that you buy some Clorox or Lysol wipes and wipe down your workspace a couple of times a day.

6. What if I feel sick? Don't panic. In Arizona; on March 23, 2020; the likelihood that you have COVID-19 is low. However, if you feel flu-like symptoms, it is reasonable to cancel appointments, not go to work, and you should call your physician. A mask still won't help you, but it might help others. Again, it won't help keep you from being sick. But if you are already sick, a mask will help you not spread your germs and any disease. Don't wear one mask all day! If you are sick, wear the mask for short periods of time when you MUST interact with people. The mask will still accumulate germs and soak through, which could make you catch other illness and compound your current sickness.

7. Should I be afraid? If you are a normal and healthy person between the ages of 5 and 65- absolutely not! You might catch this at some point and it will be unpleasant, but it will pass and you will be back to your normal life.

However, if you have a compromised immune system (perhaps you have uncontrolled diabetes, are undergoing cancer treatment, you are elderly, or you have AIDS) then this is a big deal and should be treated as such. If you think you fall into the category of immune compromised, go see your physician and talk to them about your risks and what you should do.

Our parting advice is this- we, as the health professionals in your community, are here to help. We live and work in this community and we care about you. We are all familiar with infectious disease. In dentistry, we live and breathe strict universal precautions to prevent the spread of infections. We have been doing so for 37 years! We are all here to serve you and help you make decisions about your individual situations.

8. As per ADA and CDC guidelines we have closed our office for elective dental care. We will continue to see patients who have emergency dental needs. You may call either Dr. Tanaka- 623-221-2600 or Dr. Leong- 623-340-2600 should you need immediate dental care.

In health,

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