

IDA Position re New HPSC Guidance

Revised guidance for dentists was published on Friday Evening (April 3rd) by the Health Protection Surveillance Centre (HPSC).

The guidance was considered by the IDA Clinical Practice Sub-Committee on Saturday morning (April 4th) and this communication to members has been prepared by the Management Committee today following consultation with the Association's Quality and Patient Safety Committee.

The guidance published by the HPSC supercedes previously published advice.

The latest HPSC guidance was published following the establishment of a consultative process where the views of the IDA and the HSE National Oral Health Office were invited. We welcome the establishment of this consultative process as a means to represent the concerns of our members. The scientific evidence and research on SARS-CoV-2 (COVID19) is immature and incomplete at present and we continue to advocate on behalf of the members.

IDA Position

Patients are advised to stay at home and only attend for essential dental care when other measures are unsuccessful.

The IDA continues to hold the view that AGPs should be avoided, if at all possible.

The Association does not support the HPSC guidance on the minimisation rather than avoidance of aerosol generating procedures.

The Association continues to advocate a **precautionary approach** to practice. In consideration of any and all treatment, a dentist is required to undertake a risk assessment of the potential benefit of a proposed treatment to the health of the patient against the potential harm to the patient, your staff, the wider community and the dentist.

The IDA continues to advocate that aerosol generating procedures (AGPs) should be avoided where possible, having regard to prevailing guidance on AGPs in other jurisdictions.

The IDA will be reiterating its views in reply to Professor Cormican who indicated that guidance for dentists will be kept under continuous review and have appropriate regard to emerging research and evidence. We will also copy our correspondence to Dr Colm Henry (HSE Chief Clinical Officer), Dr Dymrna Kavanagh (Chief Dental Officer), and Dr Gerry McCarthy (President of the Dental Council).

In Ireland, the sole competent authorities for the provision of Guidance and Codes of Practice for dentists are:

- Health Protection and Surveillance Centre (click to view website [here](#))
- Dental Council (click to view website [here](#))
- Department of Health (click to view website [here](#) – COVID-19 (Coronavirus): Health advice)

The information is changing rapidly, reflecting the status of the pandemic in the community, Government policy and scientific knowledge. Links to other resources can be found on the COVID 19 area of the IDA website. Further information will be circulated to members as it becomes available.

Assistance to Members

Patients are advised to stay at home and only attend for essential dental care when other measures are unsuccessful.

Members should refer to organisational measures, surgery preparation, and infection prevention control during clinical assessment within the HPSC guidance.

Infection prevention control is a series of processes, all of which have been impacted by COVID 19. As part of the principles of standard precautions of infection prevention control, PPE is one of the many essential measures to be undertaken and is our last line of defence.

To assist members, we have prepared a **patient flow chart** which you can view by **clicking [here](#)**. This aims to provide the dental practitioner and the dental team with assistance on the provision of essential dental care for patients during COVID-19.

Important Notice

This document is provided for informational purposes only for the exclusive use of Irish Dental Association members, with the aim to provide members with commentary from the Association.

The Irish Dental Association assumes no liability or responsibility for any use to which the information may be put, or for any errors.

Members should bear in mind that it is not possible to entirely eliminate the risks of COVID-19 transmission.