



Thank you for your commitment to patient care

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, you are challenged every day to keep your patients, coworkers and loved ones healthy by following the proper safety protocols. We thank you for your commitment to patient care during these tough times. Now that the public is starting to feel comfortable visiting the dentist again, this is your chance to improve vaccine confidence to help protect your community from COVID-19. Whether you decide to administer vaccines or not, you have an opportunity to help educate your community on COVID-19.

Research indicates that having conversations with health care professionals about COVID-19 and vaccines can lead to more vaccinations. We hope you find this newsletter to be a helpful resource during the next chapter of this pandemic. Thank you for being a Connection Dental Network provider.

Dentists and dental students are now authorized to administer COVID-19 vaccine

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services amended an emergency declaration to authorize dentists and dental students to vaccinate patients for COVID-19 nationwide.

At the time of the amendment, at least 28 states had already enlisted the help of dentists to administer COVID-19 vaccines during the public health emergency. The federal declaration allows licensed dentists from the remaining states to do so, regardless of state laws.

“Dentists already have the requisite knowledge and skills to administer vaccines and observe side effects – and many do so on a daily basis,” wrote ADA President Daniel J. Klemmedson, D.D.S., M.D., and ADA Executive Director Kathleen T. O’Loughlin, D.M.D.

Visit ada.org/Virus for the latest COVID-19 information. For more information about the ADA’s advocacy efforts during COVID-19, visit ada.org/COVID19Advocacy

Sources: For helpful resources from the ADA on administering vaccines, visit geha.com/VaccineResources or ada.org/en/publications/ada-news/2021-archive/march/dentists-dental-students-among-providers-now-authorized-to-administer-covid-19-vaccine-nationwide



COVID-19 CDT code updates

New CDT codes were approved by the ADA code maintenance committee in March 2021. The new vaccination and molecular testing codes are as follows:

- ▶ D1701 Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine administration - first dose
- ▶ D1702 Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine administration - second dose
- ▶ D1703 Moderna COVID-19 vaccine administration - first dose
- ▶ D1704 Moderna COVID-19 vaccine administration - second dose
- ▶ D1705 AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine administration - first dose
- ▶ D1706 AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine administration - second dose
- ▶ D1707 Janssen (Johnson & Johnson) COVID-19 vaccine administration
- ▶ D0606 Molecular testing for a public health related pathogen, including coronavirus

Please check with the payor directly to see if these new codes will be covered under the patient's policy. The payor will quote these benefits and process these claims directly. For more information, visit ada.org/en/publications/cdt/coding-education

Building confidence in COVID-19 vaccines

Vaccine confidence is the trust that patients, their families and providers have in the recommended vaccines, the providers who administer vaccines, and the process and policies that lead to vaccine development, manufacturing and use.

Many factors influence vaccine decision-making, including cultural, social, political, individual and group factors. Some people may want more information about COVID-19 vaccines, including the process for developing and authorizing these vaccines and information about their safety and effectiveness. People may have previous experiences that affect their trust and confidence in the health system.

By taking time to listen to their concerns and answer their questions, you can help people become confident in their decision to be vaccinated. Also, when you decide to get vaccinated and share the reasons why you did, you can have a powerful influence on your family and community.

The Centers for Disease Control has information to help educate people about COVID-19 vaccines, how they are developed and monitored for safety, and how individuals can talk to others about the vaccines.

cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/vaccinate-with-confidence.html



Explaining the importance of the COVID-19 vaccine to your patients

Dentists, as trusted health care providers, have a great opportunity to promote patient health and well-being by talking with their patients, staff and family members about the risks and benefits of vaccination.

Starting the conversation

Incorporate vaccination into your COVID-19 screening questions. Example: "Let's review your health history and COVID-19 responses."

Connect why you and your team are discussing the COVID-19 vaccine during a dental visit. Example: "Now the availability of COVID-19 vaccines gives us one more important tool to keep each other safe. As a health care professional, I'm happy to talk to you about COVID-19 vaccinations."

Ask simple open-ended questions when possible. Example: "Do you know where you can be vaccinated?"

Understand that not all patients will be receptive to vaccination

Respect that patient opinions vary and approach the conversation with empathy. You can express your concern for their overall health.

Some patients may have concerns around the virus and vaccinations in general, so it is important to listen and realize this won't be a "one-size-fits-all" conversation. Some patients may have medical considerations, religious beliefs or philosophical beliefs that may be a factor in their decision to get vaccinated.

Be prepared to have the vaccine conversation multiple times with the same patient. If patients have a "wait and see" approach, make note to follow up with them again during their next visit. Consider sharing your own vaccination story and maybe they can relate.

success.ada.org/~media/CPS/Files/COVID/Toolkits/PRCC/ADA_Patient_Return_Talking_About_Vaccines.pdf

New study links periodontitis and COVID-19 complications

Systemic inflammation is not only a symptom of COVID-19, but can also be a symptom of periodontal disease, or gum disease. Noticing this similarity, new research by the American Academy of Periodontology found that gum disease is linked to severe COVID-19-related complications.

These findings signal the importance of diligent oral care during COVID-19 to avoid developing or worsening periodontal disease. Gum disease can cause bleeding gums, bad breath and if left untreated, lead to tooth loss.

Of the 568 patients studied, those with periodontitis, the most severe form of gum disease, were at least three times more likely to experience COVID-19 complications including death, ICU admission and the need for assisted ventilation. Additionally, COVID-19 patients with periodontitis showed increased levels of biomarkers associated with worsened disease outcomes including white blood cell levels, D-dimer and C-reactive protein.

perio.org/periodontitis_COVID-19_complications

Oral signs of COVID-19

Research suggests that COVID-19 symptoms can manifest in oral conditions. First and foremost is the altered or impaired sense of taste. There is also evidence that painful inflamed lesions in the mouth are linked to the virus, as well as dry mouth.

The oral cavity has been proven to be a vigorous site for COVID-19 infection and for spread of the disease. The infection can infiltrate the salivary glands and infect the saliva, which can then spread to the gastrointestinal area or enter the lungs and cause pneumonia in some patients.

It is believed that because of saliva's ability to harbor infectious organisms as biomarkers for early detection, it can be employed as an alternative test for the presence of the coronavirus. The saliva test is easy, safe and noninvasive with valuable potential for self-administration.

Dental professionals should be aware of potential oral signs of COVID-19, perform thorough exams on their patients, maintain a high level of infection control procedures while seeing patients, and stay current in their knowledge of the disease.

rdhmag.com/pathology/article/14197569/discerning-the-oral-manifestations-of-covid19



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CD-NLT-0421-001

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