



DENTAL COUNCIL OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO
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Message from the Dental Council of Trinidad and Tobago

The DCTT has advised the dental fraternity of the directive from the Ministry of Health stating that provision of EMERGENCY dental care falls under the purview of essential health services.

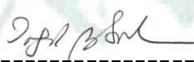
It has been brought to our attention that some dentists have been performing elective dental services and, in some instances, not utilizing the necessary PPE for themselves and their staff or following stringent infection controls in their practice. We wish to emphasize that routine dental treatment NOT be provided at this time. All aerosol generating procedures should be avoided unless absolutely necessary and, in such instances, rubber dam isolation MUST be implemented. If not possible, the alternative treatment routes should be explored such as prescription medication or even extraction. These vital precautions are recommended in order to safeguard the lives of your staff, your patients, yourself and your families.

We understand that these are difficult times, but we as the dental community must strive to place more importance on the health and well-being of the people of Trinidad and Tobago above our own personal gains.

The DCTT therefore appeals to our members to do your part in limiting the spread of this ravaging disease. See attached recommendations from the American Dental Association regarding the provision of Emergency Dental Care which can be used as a guide.

We thank you for your cooperation and look forward to your continued support.

Yours sincerely,



Dr. Ingrid Seeberan
Secretary
DCTT

What Constitutes a Dental Emergency?

The ADA recognizes that state governments and state dental associations may be best positioned to recommend to the dentists in their regions the amount of time to keep their offices closed to all but emergency care. This is fluid situation and those closest to the issue may best understand the local challenges being faced.

DENTAL EMERGENCY

Dentists should use their professional judgment in determining a patient's need for urgent or emergency care.

Dental emergencies are potentially life threatening and require immediate treatment to stop ongoing tissue bleeding, alleviate severe pain or infection, and include:

- Uncontrolled bleeding
- Cellulitis or a diffuse soft tissue bacterial infection with intra-oral or extra-oral swelling that potentially compromise the patient's airway
- Trauma involving facial bones, potentially compromising the patient's airway

Urgent dental care focuses on the management of conditions that require immediate attention **to relieve severe pain and/or risk of infection and to alleviate the burden on hospital emergency departments. These should be treated as minimally invasively as possible.**

- Severe dental pain from pulpal inflammation
- Pericoronitis or third-molar pain
- Surgical post-operative osteitis, dry socket dressing changes
- Abscess, or localized bacterial infection resulting in localized pain and swelling
- Tooth fracture resulting in pain or causing soft tissue trauma
- Dental trauma with avulsion/luxation
- Dental treatment required prior to critical medical procedures
- Final crown/bridge cementation if the temporary restoration is lost, broken or causing gingival irritation
- Biopsy of abnormal tissue

Other urgent dental care:

- Extensive dental caries or defective restorations causing pain
 - Manage with interim restorative techniques when possible (silver diamine fluoride, glass ionomers)
- Suture removal
- Denture adjustment on radiation/oncology patients
- Denture adjustments or repairs when function impeded
- Replacing temporary filling on endo access openings in patients experiencing pain
- Snipping or adjustment of an orthodontic wire or appliances piercing or ulcerating the oral mucosa

DENTAL NON EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Routine or non-urgent dental procedures includes but are not limited to:

- Initial or periodic oral examinations and recall visits, including routine radiographs
- Routine dental cleaning and preventive therapies
- Orthodontic procedures other than those to address acute issues (e.g. pain, infection, trauma) or other issues critically necessary to prevent harm to the patient
- Extraction of asymptomatic teeth
- Restorative dentistry including treatment of asymptomatic carious lesions
- Aesthetic dental procedures