

# Dentists re-open in France after two-month lockdown

May 14 2020, by Thomas Adamson and Nicolas Garriga

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In this Wednesday, May 13, 2020 photo, dentist Sabine Jendoubi, left, and her dental assistant Margot Daussat inspect the teeth of patient Veronique Guillot, during a dental appointment, at a dental office in Paris. Those with toothache that suffered through France's two-month lockdown, finally have hope to end the pain. Dental practices are cautiously re-opening and non-emergency dentist appointments are now permitted around the country, as the French government eased confinement restrictions from Monday. (AP Photo/Michel Euler)

Anyone who suffered through France's two-month lockdown with a toothache or other oral affliction of a non-emergency nature has a hope of licking the pain.

Dental practices around the country are cautiously reopening and accepting appointments after the French government eased restrictions on some businesses, services and public activity.

Yet getting back to work in the age of coronavirus requires caution, especially for over 40,000 dentists in France who are among the [health professionals](#) at highest risk of becoming infected.

Because respiratory droplets are a way the virus spreads among people, dentistry demands protecting patients and especially practitioners. That means not only disinfecting tools and surfaces, but layer upon layer of extra screens, wraps, gloves and masks.

The World Health Organization has recommended specialized face masks for [health care providers](#) performing medical procedures such as ventilation and intubation that produce fine, airborne particles, which might transmit the coronavirus. Drilling teeth for fillings is also known to generate aerosolized viral particles.

Paris dentist Sabine Jendoubi said the trade-off for safety is the discomfort of additional head and body wear.



In this Wednesday, May 13, 2020 photo, Director Carine Benharrous of a dental office speaks during an interview with the Associated Press in Paris. Those with toothache that suffered through France's two-month lockdown, finally have hope to end the pain. Dental practices are cautiously re-opening and non-emergency dentist appointments are now permitted around the country, as the French government eased confinement restrictions from Monday. (AP Photo/Michel Euler)

"A surgical suit is something that we wear in the operating theater. Today, we wear it for everything." Jendoubi said. Of the various filtering [face masks](#) certified to protect against viruses in the air, she finds the FFP2-rated model "the most complicated, as it's really tight."

"It filters out every virus and bacteria, so it's quite heavy to wear but it

protects us and the patients," Jendoubi said.

The additional precautions are also an added expense. An operator of medical clinics and offices in France, Doctocare, told the AP it is costing 50,000 euros (\$54,000) to supply each of the company's centers with the hygiene and protective equipment recommended by the French government.

"We will communicate to the government these difficult adjustments in terms of profitability, but for now we're focused on this public health issue," Carine Benharrou, director of dental operations at Doctocare, said.



In this Wednesday, May 13, 2020 photo, a masked unidentified patient has her

temperature checked by dental assistant Margot Daussat prior to a dental appointment at a dental office in Paris. Those with toothache that suffered through France's two-month lockdown, finally have hope to end the pain. Dental practices are cautiously re-opening and non-emergency dentist appointments are now permitted around the country, as the French government eased confinement restrictions from Monday. (AP Photo/Michel Euler)

The limited distance between the faces of dentists and their patients also is a potential concern, as some experts have theorized that people who get a bigger infectious dose of the [coronavirus](#) may become more seriously ill with COVID-19.

In Britain, all routine dental care has been suspended except for telephone consultations and prescriptions.

While dentists in Denmark are returning to their offices, they are wearing protective suits and plastic face shields while tending to patients lying with their mouths wide open. Cleaning teeth to remove plaque is being done by hand instead of with ultrasonic devices that would increase the risk of producing spit.

Yet in some European countries, dental practices never closed because of the virus. Dentists in Italy, one of the nations hit hardest by infections and virus-related deaths, reduced their services to take only urgent cases in person, managing other patients by telephone.





In this Wednesday, May 13, 2020 photo, dentist Sabine Jendoubi, speaks to patient Veronique Guillot during a dental appointment, at a dental office in Paris. Those with toothache that suffered through France's two-month lockdown, finally have hope to end the pain. Dental practices are cautiously re-opening and non-emergency dentist appointments are now permitted around the country, as the French government eased confinement restrictions from Monday. (AP Photo/Michel Euler)



In this photo taken on Wednesday, May 13, 2020, dentist Sabine Jendoubi, left, and her assistant Margot Daussat prepare for a dental appointment at a dental office in Paris. Those with toothache that suffered through France's two-month lockdown, finally have hope to end the pain. Dental practices are cautiously re-opening and non-emergency dentist appointments are now permitted around the country, as the French government eased confinement restrictions from Monday. (AP Photo/Michel Euler)



In this Wednesday, May 13, 2020 photo, dentist Sabine Jendoubi, left, and her assistant Margot Daussat listen to a patient during a dental appointment, at a dental office in Paris. Those with toothache that suffered through France's two-month lockdown, finally have hope to end the pain. Dental practices are cautiously re-opening and non-emergency dentist appointments are now permitted around the country, as the French government eased confinement restrictions from Monday. (AP Photo/Michel Euler)





In this Wednesday, May 13, 2020 photo, dentist Sabine Jendoubi, speaks with patient Veronique Guillot, during a dental appointment, at a dental office in Paris. Those with toothache that suffered through France's two-month lockdown, finally have hope to end the pain. Dental practices are cautiously re-opening and non-emergency dentist appointments are now permitted around the country, as the French government eased confinement restrictions from Monday. (AP Photo/Michel Euler)



In this Wednesday, May 13, 2020 photo, dental assistant Margot Daussat, left, holds a box with gloves as dentist Sabine Jendoubi, right, prepares for a dental appointment with patient Veronique Guillot at a dental office in Paris. Those with toothache that suffered through France's two-month lockdown, finally have hope to end the pain. Dental practices are cautiously re-opening and non-emergency dentist appointments are now permitted around the country, as the French government eased confinement restrictions from Monday. (AP Photo/Michel Euler)



In this Wednesday, May 13, 2020 photo, dentist Sabine Jendoubi, left, and her dental assistant Margot Daussat inspect the teeth of patient Veronique Guillot, during a dental appointment at a dental office in Paris. Those with toothache that suffered through France's two-month lockdown, finally have hope to end the pain. Dental practices are cautiously re-opening and non-emergency dentist appointments are now permitted around the country, as the French government eased confinement restrictions from Monday. (AP Photo/Michel Euler)



In this Wednesday, May 13, 2020 photo, dentist Sabrine Jendoubi, left, inspects the teeth of patient Veronique Guillot, during a dental appointment at a dental office in Paris. Those with toothache that suffered through France's two-month lockdown, finally have hope to end the pain. Dental practices are cautiously re-opening and non-emergency dentist appointments are now permitted around the country, as the French government eased confinement restrictions from Monday. (AP Photo/Michel Euler)





In this photo taken on Wednesday, May 13, 2020, dentist Sabrine Jendoubi takes a mask out of a packet as she prepares for a dental appointment at a dental office in Paris. Those with toothache that suffered through France's two-month lockdown, finally have hope to end the pain. Dental practices are cautiously re-opening and non-emergency dentist appointments are now permitted around the country, as the French government eased confinement restrictions from Monday. (AP Photo/Michel Euler)



In this Wednesday, May 13, 2020 photo, dentist Sabine Jendoubi, left, speaks to an unidentified patient upon her arrival at a dental office in Paris. Those with toothache that suffered through France's two-month lockdown, finally have hope to end the pain. Dental practices are cautiously re-opening and non-emergency dentist appointments are now permitted around the country, as the French government eased confinement restrictions from Monday. (AP Photo/Michel Euler)

Proof that a pandemic wasn't an excuse to avoid an Italian dentist chair was an April 23 photo on Twitter of U.S. Ambassador to the Holy See Callista Gingrich wearing a protective hairnet and paper drape.

"A trip to the [dentist](#) in Italy during the COVID-19 pandemic," Gingrich tweeted with emoji of an Italian flag and smiley face in sunglasses.

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