

Don't delay dental visits during pandemic

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(HealthDay)—Visiting your dentist during the coronavirus pandemic poses little risk, an expert says.

Dentists have taken measures to protect patients, but some people are still reluctant to get [dental care](#), said Dr. Cecile Feldman, dean of Rutgers University's School of Dental Medicine in New Jersey.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention issued guidelines for re-opening in June, the American Dentistry Association encourages regular dental visits, and the World Health Organization recommends continuing routine care except in hot spots where there is "intense, uncontrolled community transmission," Feldman noted.

It's crucial for people to continue dental visits, she added.

"Untreated dental disease is only going to get worse. And we know there's a link between [oral health](#) and systemic health. For example, poor periodontal health is associated with heart disease," Feldman said in a Rutgers news release.

She doesn't know of any documented cases of patients being infected with the new coronavirus during a dental visit.

"Especially for the past 35 years, dentists have known the importance of using PPE [[personal protective equipment](#)] and keeping their offices and dental instruments clean. In the 1980s, before the HIV/AIDS crisis, dentists didn't wear gloves, masks, surgical gowns or eye protection. With COVID, when we know more, we'll be able to determine if the extra precautions we're taking are necessary," Feldman said.

She noted that in "keeping with American Dentistry Association guidelines, patients at the dental school are screened for symptoms both the night before and the day of an appointment. At the [dental school](#), we require patients to wear face coverings when entering the building and our providers wear gowns, gloves, face shields, head covers, surgical gowns and N95 masks."

More information: The American Dental Association has more on [dental visits](#).

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