

# Seeking oral health care during the COVID-19 outbreak



Like many other businesses, dental offices are working to protect their employees, families and patients during the ongoing outbreak of COVID-19. In order to adapt to the rapidly changing circumstances and to comply with restrictions and recommendations, many dental offices are now only seeing patients in office in the case of a dental emergency.

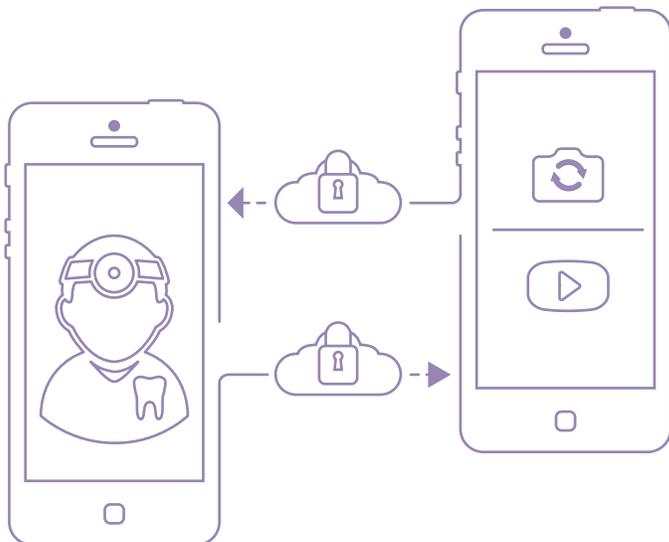
## What is a dental emergency?

According to the American Dental Association (ADA), dental emergencies are conditions or injuries that require immediate treatment because they are very serious or potentially fatal. Some examples are infections on the inside or outside of the oral cavity that could inhibit breathing, uncontrollable bleeding, or damage or injury to jaw or facial bones that cause difficulty breathing. Dentists may also be seeing patients in need of urgent dental care to prevent those patients from going into emergency healthcare facilities at this time.



## What do I do if I am in need of emergency or urgent dental care?

The first thing you should do is contact your dentist. They will be able to advise you on next steps and provide you with the help you need.



## Are there alternatives to visiting my dentist in person?

If you are undergoing a self-quarantine or practicing stringent social distancing, you may not want to have an in-office dental visit, even in the event of an emergency. Alternatives such as teledentistry allow dentists to serve their patients, without meeting in person.

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## What is teledentistry?

Teledentistry uses technology in order to connect patients with their dentist, allowing them to receive care remotely. Using digital information like audio, video and images, dentists are able to consult their patients without ever having to be in the same room with them. Patients receiving this type of evaluation typically present a specific problem and/or dental emergency related to trauma, acute infection, etc.

To provide your dentist enough information for a consultation, they may request photos of the inside and outside of your mouth, or have a video call with you so that they can take a look in real time.

Many hospitals and medical clinics have been inundated with cases of COVID-19, therefore, it is beneficial for oral health emergencies to be treated within the oral health system rather than the medical system. Teledentistry provides greater access to care for patients, allowing some relief to overburdened medical centers.

## Does Delta Dental of Minnesota accept teledentistry claims?

In an effort to help keep dental emergencies out of hospital emergency rooms and allow dentists alternative ways to serve their patients during the COVID-19 pandemic, Delta Dental of Minnesota will support emergency oral evaluations via teledentistry in accordance with a member's benefit plan allowance.

## How do I know if my dentist offers teledentistry services?

You should contact your dentist directly to find out if they offer teledentistry options.



**The Power of Smile™**  
Learn more about how your oral health connects to your overall health at:  
[DeltaDentalMN.org](https://www.DeltaDentalMN.org)