

For the Patients of Gearhart Dentistry:

New protocols and screening measures taken to protect you, our staff, and the community during the COVID-19 global pandemic.

The staff at Gearhart Dentistry cares deeply for its patients and the wonderful people of the community in which we live. In order to do our part in making socially responsible decisions that impact our staff, patients, loved ones, and surrounding community members during the COVID-19 outbreak, we are implementing new screening protocols and social-distancing measures. We will continue to maintain our outstanding universal precaution protocol during dental treatment while continuing to provide the highest level of care that our patients have become accustomed to. Your safety is our priority.

Please understand that circumstances may arise that may determine the need for temporary closure—especially as the knowledge surrounding the complexities of COVID-19 continues to evolve. If this happens, we will notify patients as soon as reasonably possible. Until then, if we can provide treatment to our patients in a safe manner for all involved, we will continue to do so.

Effective immediately and continuing until further notice, we must implement new restrictions on patient care. This is based on the latest advice we have received from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention about the coronavirus outbreak. Please read all this information carefully.

To protect our team members, patients, and community, a new screening protocol will go into effect immediately and will help provide more appropriate social-distancing measures. Patients will be asked a series of questions over the phone prior to confirming their appointment. If patients are not able to be reached by phone prior to their appointment, they will be asked in a voice mail message to call us back and answer the screening questions at least a day prior to their appointment. If patients fail to call us back before the specified time, we reserve the right to cancel their appointment. If the patient passes the screening questions, they will be asked to call us from their vehicle when they arrive for their appointment. At an appropriate time, we will then send out a staff member for additional screening measures prior to entry into the facility (we will also repeat the questions asked during the phone interview). We ask for your patience during this time as additional measures and protocols require additional time. Some patients may be receiving calls about moving their appointment times to allow for the additional time these new screening measures may take.

If you know you have any of the following conditions the CDC has deemed higher risk for COVID-19 complications, please inform us so that we can reschedule your appointment to a more appropriate time:

- Heart disease
- Diabetes
- Lung disease
- Severe asthma
- Older than 80yrs
- Chronic health conditions
- Recent or current chemotherapy treatment
- Immunocompromised
- Autoimmune disorder (Lupus, MS, etc)
- Unmanaged high blood pressure
- Kidney disease
- Smoke heavily

If in doubt or you have any concerns, please reschedule your appointment.

Stating the obvious, if within the last 14 days you have had a fever, flu-like symptoms, difficulty breathing or respiratory problems, cough, visited any areas with documented COVID-19 transmission, have come into contact with a patient with confirmed COVID-19 infection, or traveled internationally reschedule your appointment.

If you are having health concerns or have not met the criteria we have established for non-emergent care and are experiencing a dental emergency, please let us know! We will work with your primary care provider or other urgent care personnel to determine the best course of action and proper place for treatment. We will help you if the need arises, and will do so in a responsible manner.

If you are cleared for dental treatment, we want to be clear that translators, parents, guardians, and other necessary support people are welcome to accompany you to appointments but must remain in their car unless their presence in the treatment room is required for treatment. You are expected to honor social distancing recommendations and

remain 6 feet from others in hallways and reception areas, and during social interactions. They must pass our COVID-19 screening procedure on arrival. Additional screening may continue later. Any other people, including children, may NOT accompany the patient to his/her appointment. We understand this will provide a burden to many patients and ask for a sensible reason and understanding.

Please note carefully: Patients may be accompanied into the actual treatment area by another person or service animal ONLY if their presence is essential for completion of the dental treatment. An accompanying person must first pass all our screening for COVID-19, including the absence of any fever over 99.5 degrees F. This screening must be done by Gearhart Dentistry staff.

We have been, and will continue to perform more frequent cleaning of high-use and high-contact areas located outside and inside treatment areas with hospital grade disinfectants. Magazines will be removed from the waiting area. Our "prize chest" will be temporarily unavailable to our pediatric patients.

If you are cleared for treatment, expect to use a pre-procedural 1.5% hydrogen peroxide rinse prior to procedures. COVID viruses are vulnerable to oxidation and this will minimize the amount of active viral particles in aerosols generated during treatment. No ultrasonic instrumentation will be used during hygiene procedures. We will insist on using rubber dams whenever possible to minimize generation of aerosols. We will be limiting the use of our laser to non-ablative procedures until N-95 masks are available to us once again.

If you have concerns or questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to us. If you are quarantined, and in need of assistance (food, supplies, etc.) let us know. We would be honored and will attempt to help in any way that we can.

Prevention under these difficult circumstances is paramount. In doing this, we will safeguard the health and safety of our patients, our care providers, and the whole community. We appreciate your understanding during this challenging time and thank you for your cooperation. With appropriate planning and smart decisions, we should be able to decrease the impact on COVID-19 on our community. We are all in this together and will persevere.

Well wishes,

Dr. Stephanie White