



CALDWELL COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT DENTAL CLINIC

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Dear Valued Patient:

The North Carolina State Board of Dental Examiners released an updated statement regarding COVID-19 and the operation of dental clinics throughout the state: **“The recommendation (issued 16 March 2020) that dentists treat only emergency cases during the current State of Emergency remains in effect until further notice.”** Please see the back of this page for the complete statement.

What this means for our patients and families at the Caldwell County Health Department Dental Clinic:

- **If you or your child are having any dental pain or discomfort call our office immediately!**
 - Dentists are still seeing patients with emergency or urgent needs.
 - Please see the backside of this page for the Dental Board’s definition of these needs.
 - If you have an urgent need and come to our office be aware there are different protocols for admittance at the front door. You must call us first or you will not be allowed into the dental clinic. If you are sick and having a dental emergency, please be sure to mention any respiratory illness symptoms you may be experiencing. Transparency is important to ensure you receive care.
- **Until further notice, patients will be seen only for urgent and emergency dental needs.**
- **We are calling patients to reschedule any appointments currently scheduled in April 2020.**
 - If you have an appointment scheduled, we are trying to keep you on the schedule at this time. If you would rather not be rescheduled and call us to schedule at a later date that is your responsibility. It will not be our responsibility to make sure your child is seen at the dental clinic. For this reason, I highly recommend you stay on our schedule.
 - If this is extended beyond April we will continue this process until further notice.
- If you have an appointment and have been told it is considered an emergency appointment we will contact you the day before your appointment to discuss your health status, health screening protocols and confirm whether the appointment should be kept.

I urge you to contact us if you have any questions or concerns. Call us at 828-426-8525. You may need to leave a voicemail message and we will respond as soon as we can.

Sincerely,

Janelle McDonald, DDS and the Caldwell County Health Department Dental Health Staff





In an effort to provide guidance to its licensees and the public, The North Carolina State Board of Dental Examiners has defined emergency and nonemergency dental treatment during the COVID-19 pandemic as set out below. The recommendation (issued 16 March 2020) that dentists treat only emergency cases during the current State of Emergency remains in effect until further notice.

Emergency and Non-Emergency Dental Treatment

Non-emergency Dental Treatments are those procedures that can be postponed or delayed without causing patient harm or pain. Dentists should refrain from nonemergency treatment of patients during the State of Emergency surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic. Examples of non-emergency treatments include, but are not limited to:

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

Emergency Dental Treatment consists of managing conditions that require immediate attention, including to relieve severe pain or risk of infection. Dentists should use their professional judgment to safely offer emergency care to patients, including to treat pain and infection, and to alleviate the burden on hospital emergency departments and urgent care centers. Examples of emergency dental treatments include, but are not limited to:

- Uncontrolled bleeding,
- Acute abscess, or localized bacterial infection resulting in pain and swelling,
- Extensive caries or defective restorations causing pain from pulpal inflammation,
- Tooth fracture resulting in pain or causing soft tissue trauma including avulsion/luxation,
- Surgical postoperative follow-up including osteitis or dry socket dressing changes, including suture removal,
- Dental treatment required by physician prior to critical medical procedures,
- Pericoronitis or other causes of third-molar pain,
- Biopsy of abnormal tissue,
- Dental prosthetic treatment to repair or replace a temporary restoration that is lost or broken and causing pain, discomfort or gingival irritation.
- Denture adjustments or repairs when function is impeded, especially for radiation/oncology patients
- Snipping or adjustments of an orthodontic wire or appliances piercing or ulcerating the oral mucosa