



Royal College of
Dental Surgeons of Ontario

Ensuring Continued Trust

BULLETIN

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TO: ALL RCDSO MEMBERS

May 2, 2003

LATEST REVISED SARS INFORMATION FOR THE DENTAL OFFICE

This is the fifth bulletin prepared by the College on Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) to share the most current information received from the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (MOHLTC) and Health Canada (HC). The College has been monitoring the information available about SARS from sources including the MOHLTC, HC, the World Health Organization (WHO), the Centres for Disease Control (CDC) and the City of Toronto Public Health Department.

The changes to the bulletin are consistent with the current recommendations of the MOHLTC SARS Provincial Operations Centre (POC). The SARS POC recommendations are for health-care providers in outpatient settings. They are intended to limit the number of SARS cases presenting in these outpatient settings, and to contain the spread of SARS while allowing the health-care providers in outpatient settings to provide ongoing care.

On April 28, 2003, Dr. Colin D’Cunha, Commissioner of Public Health, and Dr. James Young, Commissioner of Public Security reported that the province’s containment measures are working. Dr. D’Cunha said, “The number of active cases continue to drop each day, there are fewer and fewer people in quarantine, and the vast majority of people are getting better and returning to their normal lives.”

The changes to the information in previous bulletins include:

- recommendations for signage;
- updated direction to dentists regarding who can be treated in the dental office;
- updated direction regarding contacting public health;
- revised infection control protocols;
- revised list of exposure sites for which quarantine measures have been implemented.

What are the College’s recommendations for signage?

The SARS POC recommends posting SARS notices at all entrances. See the end of this bulletin for a suggested SARS notice.

What questions should we ask patients when booking appointments and before treating patients?

The SARS POC requires dental offices to ask all patients the questions listed on the MOHLTC SARS Screening Tool when booking or confirming appointments by phone and recommends that walk-in visits be minimized.

All persons entering the office including staff must complete the MOHLTC SARS Screening Tool. The staff member, when doing the screening, should wear an NIOSH standard N95 mask or equivalent. The preferred method is for patients to be screened by telephone. The results of the screening will determine whether or not dental treatment can be provided safely for patients.

Staff members who know that they will fail the screening tool should not attend work until they have been assessed medically for SARS and cleared.

See the end of this bulletin for copies of the MOHLTC SARS Screening Tool and a suggested telephone script that can be photocopied for use in your office.

SECTION A	
1. Have you had unprotected contact with a person with SARS in the last 10 days? OR	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
2. In the last 10 days have you been to a health-care facility that is closed due to SARS? OR	↓ Quarantine applies, notify Public Health
3. Are you under quarantine, or have you been contacted by public health and put on home isolation?	

SECTION B	
Have you been to China, Hong Kong, Vietnam, Singapore or Taiwan in the last 10 days?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

SECTION C Are you experiencing <u>any</u> of the following symptoms?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Myalgia (muscle aches) OR • Malaise (severe tiredness or unwell) OR • Severe headache (worse than usual) OR • Cough (onset within 7 days) OR 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shortness of breath (worse than what is normal for you) OR • Feeling feverish, had shakes, or chills in the last 24 hours <div style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</div>

SECTION D Please record the temperature if answer to C is yes.	
Temperature	°C (Is the temperature above 38°C?) <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

If the patient answers NO to all sections A through C, then the person may be seen in the dental office for routine dental treatment using routine infection control precautions.

If the patient answers YES to only section B, the College recommends delaying elective dental treatment until more than 10 days have elapsed since the patient's return from travel to an affected area. Affected areas are updated periodically and are included in the suspect case definitions found on the HC Web site. Asymptomatic patients returning from travel to affected areas who have questions regarding SARS can be referred to a physician or can call the telephone numbers listed at the end of this bulletin for information.

If the patient answers YES to section C and/or D, the patient must be referred for a medical assessment for SARS. The College recommends delaying elective dental treatment until the patient's symptoms have resolved and SARS has been ruled out. If emergency dental treatment must be provided before SARS has been ruled out, an NIOSH standard N95 mask or equivalent, long-sleeved gown, gloves, and protective eye wear must be worn by clinical staff during treatment.

If the patient answers YES to section A, quarantine applies and public health should be notified if the patient has broken quarantine and attended the dental office. The patient should be given a surgical mask and should be sent home by private transportation or medical transport. The patient should NOT be seen for dental treatment in the dental office during the period of quarantine unless the dental condition will pose a medical threat to the patient, and the condition can not be managed by pharmacological means alone. The emergency dental treatment for persons under quarantine who are not ill with symptoms of SARS must be planned in coordination with public health authorities and must be provided using routine, airborne, contact, and droplet infection control precautions as outlined below.

If the patient answers YES to section A or B and has symptoms as in sections C or D, the patient should be given a surgical mask and directed to a hospital emergency department by private transportation or medical transport for a medical assessment for SARS after calling ahead to ensure appropriate isolation and precautions. You should call the local public health unit for advice regarding dental office staff and other patients who have had contact with the patient in the waiting room.

The symptoms listed above are consistent with the HC suspect case definition and definition of persons under investigation. These are revised periodically and can be found on the HC Web site.

What infection control precautions should we take when providing emergency dental treatment for asymptomatic patients under quarantine or patients with SARS-like symptoms, or asymptomatic patients with risk factors for exposure to SARS?

Dental treatment for such patients should be delayed unless the dental condition will pose a medical threat to the patient if left untreated. For true emergencies, severe pain or infection, which can not be managed by pharmacological means alone, the minimum emergency treatment should be provided. Wherever possible, a referral to a hospital dental clinic is recommended.

These patients should be treated using routine, airborne, droplet and contact precautions as recommended by HC for the treatment of suspect or probable SARS cases.

In the dental office this means:

- handwashing before and after any direct contact with the patient, after contact with body fluids or respiratory secretions, after contact with items known or likely to be contaminated with respiratory secretions, before donning gloves, and after removing gloves;
- personal barrier protection including clean non-sterile gloves, long-sleeved gown, N-95 mask, and eye protection during all treatment;
- minimizing aerosol and splatter by use of antimicrobial rinse, rubber dam, high volume suction, hand instrumentation where possible;

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- treating these patients when no other patients are present;
- treating these patients in a room with a closed door if possible;
- all aerosol-generating procedures must be performed in an isolation room with negative pressure relative to the surrounding area;
- disinfecting all surfaces that may have come into contact with respiratory secretions with a high-level (hospital grade) disinfectant between patients (these include stabilized hydrogen peroxide products, phenolics, quaternary ammonium compounds, and 1/100 dilution of household bleach);
- routine precautions for handling soiled linen and clinical waste following municipal/regional requirements;
- gowns should be removed before leaving the operatory;
- if a suspect or probable SARS case waited in the waiting room, all surfaces and toys must be disinfected and magazines discarded.

The difficulty of meeting these conditions in most dental offices may necessitate the referral of suspect and probable SARS cases who require emergency dental treatment to appropriate facilities.

Further information can be found in the following documents available on-line on the HCWeb site:

- Routine Practices and Additional Precautions for Preventing the Transmission of Infection in Health Care;
- Infection Control Guidance for Health Care Workers in Outpatient Settings: SARS;
- or by contacting RCDSO staff – Dr. Robert Carroll or Dr. Lesia Waschuk.

Where can we get information regarding quarantine orders?

At the time of writing, quarantine orders apply to people who have:

- had direct contact with a SARS patient;
- visited Ward Damiani Funeral Home in Woodbridge, April 18 or April 19 (specific times);
- visited Sunnybrook Hospital CCU and CVICU, April 16-18;
- visited St. David's Church, Maple, April 19 (specific times).

Information regarding facilities closed due to SARS can be found in the news releases posted on the MOHLTC Web site, or by contacting your local public health unit. Members are encouraged to check regularly to ensure current information. Members are also advised that some patients have broken quarantine and home isolation orders to present for health care. Therefore the assumption should not be made that a patient who presents in the office is not under quarantine or home isolation restrictions.

What should we do if we have already treated a patient with a history of contact with a SARS patient or a history of travel to an affected area?

You may consider contacting the patient to find out whether he/she has developed SARS-like symptoms since his/her appointment in the dental office. If he/she has, you should contact your local public health unit for advice and direction.

Where can we obtain N-95 masks?

N-95 masks are masks that filter particles one micron in size and have a 95% filter efficiency and provide a tight facial seal (less than 10% leak). Standard TB masks meet these criteria. The Canadian Dental Association has compiled a list of manufacturers and models of N-95 masks.

N-95 masks should be worn by front desk personnel who are required to screen patients and by all clinical staff if SARS is a concern.

Records

Members are advised to include the results of their screening protocol for each patient as part of the patient's permanent record.

CONTACT INFORMATION and LINKS

- Health Canada documents for the general public and health-care practitioners
<http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/pphb-dgsp/psp/sars-sras/index.html>
- Ontario's Health Infoline: 1-888-668-4636
- Toronto Public Health Hotline: 416-338-7600
- Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care
Locations of SARS assessment clinics can also be found on this site.
http://www.health.gov.on.ca/english/public/updates/archives/hu_03/hu_sars.html
- Contact information for local public health units
http://www.health.gov.on.ca/english/public/contact/phu/phuloc_dt.html
- Health Canada SARS case definitions
http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/pphb-dgsp/psp/sars-sras/sarscasedef-0317_e.html
- Health Canada definition of persons under investigation
http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/pphb-dgsp/psp/sars-sras/sars-pui_e.html
- Routine Practices and Additional Precautions for Preventing the Transmission of Infection in Health Care
<http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/pphb-dgsp/psp/publicat/ccdr-rmtc/99pdf/cdr25s4e.pdf>
- Infection Control Guidance for Health Care Workers In Outpatient Settings: SARS
http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/pphb-dgsp/psp/sars-sras/pdf/sars-outpatient-factsheet-0324_e.pdf

ANY QUESTIONS?

If you have any further questions, please contact the following College staff:

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NEW SEVERE ACUTE RESPIRATORY SYNDROME (SARS) SCREENING TOOL

For All Ontario Healthcare Settings

This screening tool is to be used by all Ontario healthcare settings.

SECTION A	
1. Have you had unprotected contact with a person with SARS in the last 10 days? OR	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
2. In the last 10 days have you been to a health-care facility that is closed due to SARS? OR	↓ Quarantine applies, notify Public Health
3. Are you under quarantine, or have you been contacted by public health and put on home isolation?	

SECTION B	
Have you been to China, Hong Kong, Vietnam, Singapore or Taiwan in the last 10 days?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

SECTION C Are you experiencing <u>any</u> of the following symptoms?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Myalgia (muscle aches) OR • Malaise (severe tiredness or unwell) OR • Severe headache (worse than usual) OR • Cough (onset within 7 days) OR 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shortness of breath (worse than what is normal for you) OR • Feeling feverish, had shakes, or chills in the last 24 hours <div style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</div>

SECTION D Please record the temperature if answer to C is yes.	
Temperature	°C (Is the temperature above 38°C?) <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

<p>ROUTINE DENTAL TREATMENT CAN BE PROVIDED</p> <p>If the response is NO to all sections A through C.</p>
<p>THE COLLEGE RECOMMENDS DELAYING ELECTIVE DENTAL TREATMENT</p> <p>If the response is YES to only section B.</p>
<p>NO DENTAL TREATMENT SHOULD BE PROVIDED PENDING MEDICAL ASSESSMENT AND/OR CONSULTATION WITH PUBLIC HEALTH</p> <p>If the patient answers YES to section A OR</p> <p>If the patient answers YES to section C and/or D OR</p> <p>If the patient answers YES to section A or B and YES to section C or D.</p>

STOP

Read Carefully Before Entering

Have you been in unprotected contact with a patient with SARS in the past 10 days?

OR

In the past 10 days, have you been to a health-care facility that is closed due to SARS?

If the answer to **EITHER** of these questions is **YES**, please contact you local Public Health Unit.

AND

If you have any of the following: muscle aches, severe fatigue, severe headache, a cough that started in the last week, shortness of breath worse than usual, or any fever, you should not enter the office and please go to the Emergency Department or SARS clinic.

(contact phone numbers)

Have you returned from China, Hong Kong, Vietnam, Singapore or Taiwan in the past 10 days?

AND

If you have any of the following: muscle aches, severe fatigue, severe headache, a cough that started in the last week, shortness of breath worse than usual, or any fever?

If the answer to **BOTH** of these questions is **YES**, you should not enter the office. You should go to the nearest Emergency Department or SARS Clinic immediately.

If you have a fever, cold or cough and have not been screened by telephone, please call the office to reschedule your appointment or to be screened by telephone.

SAMPLE TELEPHONE SCRIPT

Are you calling because you are ill?

If the answer is NO, please ignore the rest of this SARS message.

If the answer is YES, please listen...

You have reached (*add in name of office*). Please listen to the entire message. Due to a current outbreak of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome or SARS, this office is taking precautions to control the spread of the disease.

If you have been in contact with someone with active SARS, or if you have visited a hospital that is now closed due to SARS, or travelled to Vietnam, China, Hong Kong, Singapore or Taiwan AND you have a fever, headache, muscle aches, malaise, cough or shortness of breath, please **DO NOT COME INTO THE OFFICE.**

You can either call TeleHealth Ontario at 1-866-797-0000, or the nearest emergency department, or SARS assessment centre.