



**CDAA Position Statement
on**

**Mitigating the Spread of Covid-19
Considerations for Oral Healthcare Providers**

The Canadian Dental Assistants Association (CDAA), representing dental assistants across Canada, is joining our health care colleagues in encouraging all health care professionals, including oral health practitioners to be vaccinated against Covid-19. In addition, the CDAA calls on provincial and territorial governments to mandate the wearing of PPE that has been tested and shown to provide the highest level of protection to the wearer from Covid-19 in order to protect the health of those who work in the oral healthcare clinical environment.

Along with getting vaccinated, the CDAA encourages oral healthcare providers to follow all local and provincial public health protocols during the pandemic.

Background

Dental assistants have a fundamental duty of care towards their patients and the public, while providing optimum oral healthcare to their patients. That care includes ensuring the health and safety of our patients while they are in our dental environment.

Vaccinations have proven to reduce the severity of disease in vaccinated individuals and have proven to reduce the viral load in those individuals should they contract the disease. Reduced severity of disease means fewer burdens on our healthcare system in caring for those who become infected with Covid-19. Reduced viral load means the vaccinated individual is less likely to spread the disease to others.

Limiting the transmission of Covid-19 in the oral healthcare setting requires rigorous infection prevention and control measures, of which PPE is a fundamental element. High quality and appropriately applied PPE is essential to limit the acquisition and transmission of the virus to protect both oral health professionals, the patients they care for, and the wider community.

Benefits

As the highly contagious Covid-19 variants continue to surge across Canada, vaccination of oral health care practitioners and the required use of high quality and appropriate PPE are additional measures that will help to decrease infection rates, increase protection of our oral health workforce and significantly reduce the burden on the capacity of the overall Canadian health care system.

The use of high-level PPE will not only limit disease spread but ensures that there will be adequate numbers of clinical dental staff to meet the oral healthcare needs of the public during this global pandemic.

Conclusion

The support of dental employers through ensuring that their clinical dental staff is provided with the appropriate and high quality PPE is essential to mitigating the transmission of Covid-19.

The support of governments in mandating that appropriate PPE be provided to all healthcare providers, including oral healthcare clinical staff, will ensure that dental employers are providing a safer working environment and safer treatment setting for patients, especially vulnerable populations.

Encouraging oral healthcare providers to take advantage of all vaccinations available to protect their personal health, respects individual agency and increases the overall health of the dental workforce. Encouraging oral healthcare providers to follow their regional public health protocols increases the safety of those individuals and their patients.

Ensuring the safety of our patients to the best of our ability has, and always will be, a top priority of the Canadian Dental Assistants Association. Dental assistants have proven this throughout the pandemic as they have bravely adapted to additional protocols and procedures to continue to deliver essential and safe oral healthcare to their patients.

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