

*Dr. Sherman at Shore Children's Dental Care will be writing monthly informational articles about topics on Pediatric Dentistry. We hope that this information will help answer questions that most parents have about dental care for their children.*

# COVID-19 Recovery

—by Dr. Irvin B. Sherman DDS MScD

## *The pediatric dental care that we provide to our patients was unexpectedly disrupted recently.*

On March 16, 2020 it was announced by state and government officials that our practice, being non-essential, would need to close its doors to our patients for a minimum of two weeks; maybe longer. We had no idea at that time what impact this would have on our patients, our staff, and the surrounding communities until it became a global pandemic. We worked diligently to figure out how we would continue to provide the type of care we were trained to deliver, without the ability to see our patients.

Our doctors quickly adapted to a virtual mode of care and we updated our practice management program to accommodate what has become known as “Teledentistry.” We have continued to provide support for our patients on an emergency basis. Although the transaction of care is not in person, it allows us to supervise and monitor dental treatment and orthodontic care. Our comprehensive services are delivered via video capabilities or by phone call and the exchange of photographs when necessary.

Although we are pleased to be able to offer 24/7 virtual support, we understand this does not compare to the in-office attention we are accustomed to providing our patients. We have managed hundreds of calls from parents with children needing urgent management of a dental trauma or emergency. This has been extremely difficult for our practice as the weeks go by and we remain unable to schedule appointments in our offices.

Our Governor has advised that non-essential businesses may reopen over the next few weeks. We will be following strict directives from the government and the New Jersey Dental Association. This means that even though we will be allowed to reopen, we will be operating with revised practice protocols and seeing minimal patients. It will be critical that we follow all guidelines as delivered to us with

priority being health and safety for everyone. To comply with these directives, we will need to limit the number of people in our offices.

We realize this is not ideal for everyone that wants an appointment for their child or children as soon as we reopen. It simply will not be conceivable to schedule as we did prior to this pandemic. We will, however, do our best to see those that need urgent care, and dental treatment will be scheduled based on a strict vetting process coordinated by all our Pediatric Dentists.

We will not be successful without the support of our parents, Pediatricians, and other referring professionals. We will be doing pre-appointment health screenings, requesting updates be completed on our patient portal, requiring a face covering for all persons entering our offices, and necessitating parents remain in their car during appointments. We will also have minimal, if any, exchange of in-office transactions, including, but not limited to payments, paperwork, and appointment scheduling. We will be managing all transactions by phone, text, or email. We will be emailing important updates to our patients as well as posting this information on our website.

We ask that you continue to trust in our ability to not only provide the best in Pediatric Dental Care, but to do so in a safe environment; one that protects you, your families, our staff and the surrounding communities. We do not take lightly the impact that this pandemic has had on all of us, but together, we can recover and get your children back to good oral health. We look forward to seeing you soon.



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