The Washington State Dental Quality Assurance Commission finds that screening for coronavirus is within the scope of practice of a dentist under RCW 18.32.020(4).

A dentist may screen patients for the coronavirus by administering the test, prescribing the test to be administered at a testing site, and delegating the administration of the test to a licensed dental hygienist under general supervision and to a licensed expanded function dental auxiliary or a registered dental assistant under close supervision. A licensed dentist may purchase testing supplies.

Responsibilities of the licensed dentist administering or prescribing a coronavirus test include:

1. Follow the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s Interim Guidelines for Collecting, Handling, and Testing Clinical Specimens;
2. Notify the patient of results;
3. Refer the patient to their primary care physician, medical clinic, or local health department upon a positive result; and
4. Notify the local county health department upon a positive result as required by Washington State Department of Health.
5. Follow all other local, state, and federal laws.

Screening is a valuable resource for public health during this pandemic. Procedures inherent in dentistry necessitate a better knowledge of who may carry the virus to attempt to reduce the spread. Methods for screening are quickly evolving. As this is a highly dynamic situation, information from resources changes quickly, and keeping current with new practices can be overwhelming.

Resources include:
Governor’s Proclamation 20-24.1

Department of Health (DOH)
- Healthcare Providers
- Conservation of PPE
- Re-use of PPE
• Infection control for aerosol generating procedures
• Pharmacy Plan-19
• Contact Tracing

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
• Using PPE
• Strategies to Optimize PPE Supply
• Guidance for Dental Settings
• Interim Guidelines for Collecting, Handling, and Testing Clinical Specimens

U.S. Department of Labor (OSHA)
• Dentistry Workers

Organization for Safety Asepsis and Prevention (OSAP)
• COVID Toolkit

American Dental Association (ADA)

Washington State Dental Association (WSDA)

If a dentist processes rapid point-of-care tests in their office a medical test site license or waiver may be required. Please contact the Department of Health Medical Test Site program at lqa@doh.wa.gov.

We appreciate the continued efforts of dentists in serving the public well by how they practice dentistry during this unprecedented challenge.