



It's time to go back to the dentist!



Cavities are almost entirely preventable, but more than 50% of children experience tooth decay by third grade.



More than 120 diseases, including diabetes, can show early symptoms in the mouth.¹

Many dental clinics in Virginia are now open for non-emergency dental care. Delta Dental of Virginia is joining dentists in urging people not to delay dental exams. Routine dental care is particularly important for children, those who are pregnant and those who have a chronic medical condition, which may put them at higher risk for dental problems. And routine dental exams may detect early warning signs for other health conditions.¹

COVID-19 impacts on preventive dental care

In a recent Kaiser Family Foundation poll, 52% of adult respondents said they or a family member skipped or delayed dental or medical care in 2020 because of COVID-19.

An American Dental Association (ADA) national survey also found that dental visits are about 60% of what they were before dental offices closed for non-emergency care in mid-March as the pandemic took hold. The Kaiser poll also found that 70% of respondents expect to catch up on the care they previously delayed.

Continued on next page



Is it safe to return to the dentist?

Many Americans indicate that they plan to return to the dentist soon. It's reassuring to know that dental offices have traditionally been safe places to visit, and now they have more measures in place to protect patients in accordance with guidance from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the ADA, including:

- Asking health-related screening questions prior to scheduled appointments. Dental team members may take a patient's temperature upon arrival and may even ask the same series of screening questions again.
- Scheduling appointments to allow more time to disinfect exam rooms between visits.
- Changing the layout of waiting rooms and other spaces to provide more room for separation between patients or asking patients to wait for their appointment in cars to ensure proper distancing. Commonly-touched items such as toys and magazines may have been removed from waiting areas.

- Providing additional personal protective equipment for dental office employees.
- Requiring all who enter a dental office to wear a face covering.

Regular brushing and flossing between visits remains of vital importance for maintaining a healthy smile. A regular oral health routine at home may help prevent problems between regular dental checkups.

Your health and well-being is our top priority. Stay informed of the changing environment related to COVID-19 on our member website.

For more information on COVID-19 and dental visits, or to locate a Delta Dental dentist near you, visit [DeltaDentalVA.com](https://www.DeltaDentalVA.com).

¹Steven L. Bricker, Robert P. Langlais, and Craig S. Miller, Oral Diagnosis, Oral Medicine and Treatment Planning (Philadelphia: Lea & Febiger, 1994).