### QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ON COVID19 & ORAL HEALTH

<table>
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<th>Questions</th>
<th>Answers</th>
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| Are people with oral health problems (such as tooth decay, gum diseases) more likely to get COVID-19? | There is no evidence for this at the moment. However, it is important to maintain good oral health to ensure good overall health in the context of COVID-19. Co-morbidities associated with poor oral health, such as diabetes:  
  • are associated with the development and progression of periodontal disease (gum diseases).  
  • people with diabetes are more likely to have serious complications and become seriously ill from COVID-19. |
| How safe are dental/primary care clinics in the context of COVID-19?      | Dental / Primary care clinics are considered to pose a risk of COVID-19 transmission, because:  
  o Symptomatic, pre-symptomatic or asymptomatic COVID-19 patients can infect others. Therefore, persons infected with COVID-19 virus but not showing any symptom of COVID-19 (e.g. fever and cough, shortness of breath) can infect others while visiting the dental/primary care clinics.  
  o Dental/Primary care clinics may increase the risk of getting COVID-19 because there may be:  
    • direct transmission through inhalation of droplets that are generated through coughing or sneezing of COVID-19 patients;  
    • direct transmission via exposure of eye, nasal or oral mucosa to infectious droplets;  
    • indirect transmission via touching contaminated surfaces in the clinics;  
    • an infection risk from oral health care procedures using equipment such as high-speed drills and ultrasonic scalers which are aerosol-generating procedures. Such oral health care procedures cause significant droplet spray and aerosols that can rapidly contaminate surfaces and spread infection. |
| Can people go to the dental/primary care clinics to seek routine oral health care in the context of COVID19? | It is advised to postpone non-urgent oral health care, such as dental checkups and professional cleaning, to prevent the risk of transmission of COVID-19 virus to others and the possibility of becoming infected by COVID-19 virus in the dental / primary care clinics*. |
| If people have an oral health problem (such as toothache) in the context of COVID-19, is it possible to visit dental/primary care centers? | Yes, people should seek the necessary care. However, should not go to the dental / primary care clinic directly without calling in advance. There is need to reduce the risk of getting/transmission of COVID-19.  
People should follow these simple rules before visiting a dental/primary care clinic*:  
  o contact nearby dental / primary care clinic (e.g. by phone) and obtain a remote consultation with oral health care professionals such as dentists / primary care workers who will assess remotely whether people need urgent / emergency care in a clinic, or if medication may help;  
  o if the remote tele-consultation identifies an emergency or urgent clinical situation, people should be instructed on how to get help as follows:  
    • The dentist may refer people to a special care facility through a triage unit or people may get an appointment with their routine provider. |
The local rules and regulations on oral health care may change depending on the context of COVID-19. Therefore, people should inquire with the dental/primary care clinics or local authorities about the local regulations so that people are informed about their options.

For more general information on COVID-19 and Oral health please visit the following websites:

https://www.afro.who.int/health-topics/coronavirus-covid-19
https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/oral-health
https://www.afro.who.int/health-topics/oral-health

**Can people maintain good oral health (like preventing dental caries, and gum diseases) in the context of COVID-19?**

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<th>Can people maintain good oral health (like preventing dental caries, and gum diseases) in the context of COVID-19?</th>
<th>Yes, people can self-maintain a good oral health by following simple advice</th>
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| • Emergency or urgent situations comprise an acute oral infection, significant or prolonged bleeding, severe pain that cannot be controlled with pain-killers or dental/oro-facial trauma. | o choose a well-balanced diet that is low in sugars and high in fruit and vegetables.  
o limit consumption of sugar sweetened beverages such as fizzy drinks, and soft drinks (water is best);  
o avoid all forms of tobacco, including chewing of hard nuts (e.g. areca nuts);  
o reduce the consumption of alcoholic drinks;  
o maintain good oral hygiene by brushing teeth with a fluoride-containing toothpaste twice a day. |

*The local rules and regulations on oral health care may change depending on the context of COVID-19. Therefore, people should inquire with the dental/primary care clinics or local authorities about the local regulations so that people are informed about their options.*