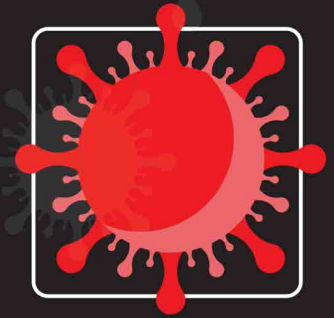


# 'WASH YOUR HANDS AND BRUSH YOUR TEETH'



## How is COVID-19 spread?

Direct spread, from an infected person, is via saliva droplets expelled from the mouth when coughing, sneezing or even talking. Indirect or direct spread between individuals can also take place via physical contact, particularly with the hands. Thus, the hands may pick up the virus from contaminated surfaces and then infect other surfaces or people by touch. For this reason, hand contact with the eyes and mouth should be avoided.



## Is there anything I can do to help prevent infection?

Stay at home with short excursions only on medical grounds, essential shopping or exercise; work from home if possible; when out, apply the recommended social distancing of at least two metres (six feet); avoid crowded public places and transport if possible; regularly wash your hands, particularly after coming into contact with surfaces away from home; disinfect surfaces you frequently come into contact with, using appropriate agents such as bleach.



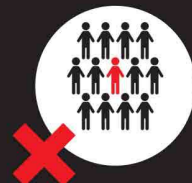
## What is the background to recommending handwashing?

Hands can become infected by the virus or transmit the virus. Handwashing uses soap or handwashing products known to kill a range of germs, including viruses like COVID-19. The kill rate is very high and very quick, which is why a regular 20 second hand wash is recommended.



## What is the role of the dentist and his team in COVID-19?

In lockdown, the dental needs of the UK population have not changed. Unfortunately, the majority of dental practices and clinics had to close completely and only telephone contact has been available to provide advice, analgesia (pain killers) and antibiotics – often referred to as the 3As. As lockdown starts to ease, a return to some form of dentistry norm is expected.



## What can I do at home to keep my mouth healthy?

Brushing your teeth with a fluoride toothpaste for two minutes twice a day still stands as the dental team's mantra. Toothpastes contain detergents which are the same as those found in many hand washing products and, therefore, provide activity against microbes in the mouth, including coronavirus. The effect lasts a few hours after brushing, thereby reducing viral load in saliva in an infected individual or preventing colonisation of the mouth by the virus. Thus, toothpaste has a role in preventing the spread of or infection by COVID-19.



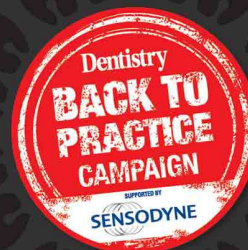
## Should I brush my teeth more often?

Ideally yes, but for many people this may be difficult to comply with. Timing of brushing is important – brush immediately before leaving home, getting on public transport or attending clinics, including the dentist. A simple way to increase contact with toothpaste is to carry toothpaste with you and apply it to the mouth on a finger.



## I have a denture. What is the advice for care during COVID-19?

The advice essentially remains the same for denture care. Bear in mind the denture can become infected with coronavirus and spread the virus to others who might handle your denture. Thus, the denture should not be worn during sleep. It should be cleaned once a day with a product that will kill coronavirus. This could be toothpaste on a brush or soaking it overnight in diluted hand wash or washing up liquid, with water rinsing before reinsertion.



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