Steps to Take if a Patient Reports COVID-19 Exposure After Treatment

A patient that was recently treated in the practice has reported that they or a member of their household has a confirmed case of COVID-19. Follow these steps to help manage the health of any team members who may have been exposed to that patient.

Finding out that a patient or close family member has tested positive for COVID-19 can be a cause for concern for you and anyone in the practice who may have interacted with the patient during the appointment. These steps will help guide you through what you should do if someone in your practice tests positive for COVID-19.

Identify each staff member, both clinical and administrative personnel, who had contact with the patient during the appointment. Assess the level of risk exposure for staff:

Staff determined to have had higher risk exposure should actively monitor their health, isolate, and ideally refrain from working for 14 days after exposure.

The CDC has also allowed for the following options:
If no signs or symptoms are exhibited throughout the isolation, staff may return to work after 10 days without need for testing, or return after 7 days if a negative test is obtained within 48 hours of the planned discontinuation.

- Those who do not develop a fever or other symptoms of COVID-19 can return to work after the appropriate isolation time has passed.
- If any staff member develops signs or symptoms consistent with contracting COVID-19, please refer to Protocols to Follow if a Staff or Household Member is COVID-19+.

Staff determined to have had lower risk exposure can continue to work with appropriate PPE and should actively self-monitor their health for 14 days after the exposure.

- Those without a fever or other symptoms of COVID-19 can continue to work.
- If any staff member develops signs or symptoms consistent with contracting COVID-19, please refer to Protocols to Follow if a Staff or Household Member is COVID-19+.

Generally speaking a lower risk exposure is seen when an incident of longer than 15 minutes that is within 6 feet or less of the staff occurs, and that staff is wearing appropriate PPE.

Dentists are urged to follow the recommendations of the CDC and state/local public health authority for additional steps. See the CDC's Interim U.S. Guidance for Risk Assessment and Work Restrictions for Healthcare Personnel with Potential Exposure to COVID-19 for guidance on infection control in a healthcare setting.