

**BY EMAIL**

**To: All GDPs NI**

**Web Site :**

[www.hscboard.hscni.net](http://www.hscboard.hscni.net)

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**19 March 2020**

Dear Colleague

**Further Advice for GDPs on COVID-19**

As per my letter of 18 March 2020 aerosol generating procedures (AGPs) are to be restricted within the general dental services. AGPs are defined as medical and patient care procedures that result in the production of airborne particles. These are relevant to COVID-19 transmission since infection may occur via both direct air-borne infection and indirect spread via contact with contaminated surfaces. Restrictions of AGPs are therefore an important control measure. The clarification below of what constitutes an AGP should be read alongside the above mentioned letter, the Dental COVID-19 FAQs, and any further guidance that may be issued.

Dental AGPs include:

- Use of the high-speed handpiece
- Use of cavitron, piezosonic and other mechanised scalers
- High pressure 3-in-1 syringe  
(The risk of aerosols may be reduced when using a 3-in-1 if only the irrigant function is used, followed by low pressure air flow from the 3-in-1 and all performed with directed high-volume suction).
- Use of air-driven surgical handpieces

Non-AGPs include

- Examinations and assessments
- Hand scaling with suction
- Non-surgical extractions  
(Surgical extractions with a speed reducing handpiece could be used for bone removal with cooling provided using saline dispensed via a syringe or similar along with high speed suction.)

- Removable denture stages

#### Emergency Care Exceptions

- Opening teeth for drainage or management of irreversible pulpitis requires a high-speed handpiece. Rubber dam with high volume suction has been shown to considerably reduce aerosol production.

I appreciate the effort and hard work necessary at this time and the additional stress experienced by members of the dental team. I would remind you that dental practitioners can contact Inspire General Dental Services Assistance Programme confidentially 24 hours a day at 0800 3895362 with further info available at

<http://www.hscbusiness.hscni.net/services/3078.htm>

BDA members may also contact Health Assured 24 hours a day as part of the BDA Member Assistance Programme at 0800 0305182 with further info available at <https://bda.org/health-assured>.

Yours sincerely



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