

May 24, 2020

RE: PDG patients who may have Covid19 trepidations about office visits

I'd like to share my experience with you. When I received the email from Petaluma Dental saying they were reopening, I sat on it for a few days, being wary; but I really needed a cleaning and checkup, so I called the staff to find out what precautions were put in place.

I'm 69 and have Lupus, an autoimmune disease, and am seriously underweight – high risk. As I told the staff, I knew they would be wearing protective masks, gloves and glasses, but what about me? I'd be sitting there with my mouth wide open; and who had been in that room before me? So they explained their precautionary procedures and I had my first dental cleaning in almost 6 months last Wednesday.

Well, hats off to Dr. Mangrum! She had obviously spent countless days researching how to reopen, and her preparations were very impressive. Here's what happened:

First, they emailed a Covid questionnaire to me, which I scanned and returned (hands off). All of the payment arrangements were made with staff by telephone, also limiting contact.

When I arrived, I called from my car to announce my arrival. My Hygienist actually came out to my car to usher me in, dressed in full protective gear, including a shroud that fits over her head and covers everything but her N-95 mask and protective glasses. I was required to wear a mask, sanitize my hands at the front reception counter, and she took my temperature there as well, before I was ushered to her room (exclusively used by her, except when the Dentist does the checkup), where I removed my mask for the procedure.

First thing, she had me gargle for 30 seconds with OraCare, the extremely strong bacteria/virus mouthwash combination that is used after root canals and for other serious dental issues. She put on a full face shield, then she sat me down in the chair and before she started cleaning she used a laser along my gum line to kill any further bacteria or virus.

They are now using a better suction device which is very powerful and is a full mouth device. Additionally, there is a large vacuum device stationed just over the patient's head, which picks up any remaining "floating" droplets.

But most impressive is their sanitizing process. Besides wiping down the chair and everything a patient is in contact with along with sterilizing the tools, Dr. Mangrum is now using Hypochlorous acid – an electrolyzed combination of distilled water and Kosher salt (and perhaps a bit of distilled white vinegar to keep the pH level at the right level). The electrolysis causes the combination to form a light acid (similar to citric acid) which kills viruses. Not only is it used between patients in the facility, it is used to treat the dental crew in-between patients to sanitize their personal protective equipment.

I was so impressed, I researched it myself and went online to purchase one for home use! It is safe, effective and doesn't even have to be rinsed off fruit and vegetables. (And believe me, I'm totally tired of having to wipe down or otherwise sanitize absolutely everything I bring into my home, I can't wait to be able to just spray down all the groceries and packages!)

So, again – HATS OFF to Dr. Mangrum, and to her staff who are braving this Covid environment and back to serving patients!

I can't imagine anything more they could do to make a safe environment for patients. I think I covered every detail, but feel free to email me with any questions if you still feel wary. Don't worry – they've got your back!

Here's to Health,

Eva Hawkins-Herrerias
Santa Rosa CA