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Media Release

Oral health during COVID-19 lockdowns

Oral health is an integral part of general health and should not be ignored during COVID-19 lockdowns. Poor oral health is closely linked to general health including conditions such as heart disease, diabetes, stroke, respiratory disease and aspirational pneumonia.

Lockdowns are one of the key strategies to manage the COVID-19 pandemic in today's life. While it is generally disruptive to the normal activities of many, the restriction on people movement serves to also disrupt the spread of the virus across the community.

Balancing the risk of virus spread with the importance of maintaining good oral health during a lockdown order, and taking into account the severity of the COVID-19 spread in the community at the time, non-urgent dental treatments should be deferred if it is clinically appropriate to do so.

During lockdowns that allow oral health services to continue as essential health services, the ADOHTA, ADPA and DHAA call on all Dental Hygienists, Dental Prosthetists, Dental Therapists and Oral Health Therapists to support the government's effort to avoid unnecessary movement of the community. They must exercise their professional judgement to review each patient on a case by case basis prior to confirming their dental appointments, to determine if the treatment during the lockdown period serves the best interest of the patient.

If non-essential dental appointments are deferred or cancelled, it is important that members of the public continue to maintain good oral hygiene routine. This involves brushing teeth twice daily with fluoride toothpaste, flossing between teeth daily, as well as reducing sugary and acidic drinks and alcohol.

During this challenging time, oral health practitioners, government agencies and the public must work together and support each other, so that the health and well being of the community is maintained.

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