Ordering COVID-19 Testing Prior to Dental Procedures

Testing protocol for urgent high-risk dental procedures which require significant aerosol


Key principles

1. Resources for COVID-19 testing continue to expand in Rhode Island. For the most current list of testing locations, visit the Testing section of the website.
2. Dental providers may order testing for patients prior to time-sensitive procedures where effective control of aerosol is not possible.
3. Those ordering tests should have a full understanding of what the test provides. See Tests and Testing for COVID-19 by Glick for details.

Process

1. Evaluate patient first by phone to assess urgency of visit and to screen for any symptoms of COVID-19.
2. Actively screen for fever and symptoms of COVID-19 before patient enters the facility. Evaluate treatment need to address urgent or emergent need. Consider testing if aerosol required and cannot be controlled with isolation strategies.
3. Go to https://health.ri.gov/diseases/ncov2019/for/providers/testforyourpatients/ to review provider testing options. Use online COVID ordering system which will require initial registration using your dental license number and National Provider Identifier (NPI).
4. Results should be obtained within three to five hours
   a. If positive, refer to primary care physician or respiratory clinic to manage and coordinate outpatient care. Call the RIDOH COVID Hotline, 401-654-6990 for additional guidance.
   b. If negative, again actively screen for fever and symptoms of COVID-19 before patient enters the facility, avoid family in waiting room, and use appropriate PPE for aerosol-generating procedure. Proceed with urgent care using aerosol minimally. Disinfect room according to CDC guidance using required contact time.
5. Provide antibiotic/analgesic/other palliative measures as appropriate until negative test result received and care can be managed.