Flu pandemic advice

The Department of Health has issued advice to dentists in the event of a flu pandemic. This includes contacting asymptomatic patients 24 hours before an appointment to ensure they are symptom-free and screening them when they arrive.

In the case of infected patients, treatment should be delayed until they are asymptomatic, if possible. PCTs will provide advice on additional precautions required for emergency care.

During a flu epidemic, dental practices should ensure excellent hygiene, with disposable tissues for staff to cover the face during and after sneezing, coughing and wiping or blowing the nose, or during and after contact with respiratory secretions and contaminated objects. Hands should be thoroughly washed with soap and water or alcohol rub for 30 seconds.

Coughing and sneezing patients in waiting areas should wear surgical masks. Non-essential items such as soft furnishings, as well as toys, books, newspapers and magazines) should be removed from reception and waiting areas.

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