

March 19, 2020

**Dear Dr. Sramkova,**

Please see below for an update on available Coronavirus resources for AAO members.

### **Cyber Criminals and COVID-19**

Unfortunately, cybercriminals are now leveraging the COVID-19 pandemic to target businesses of all sizes. Historically, successful cyber-attacks launched against the orthodontic sector have resulted in stolen, inaccessible, or destroyed patient electronic health information, the unavailability of websites, servers, and email systems, disabled or disrupted telephone communications, and the cancellation or delay of scheduled appointments. As the rapid emergence of COVID-19 within the US has already begun to place a strain on our practices, disruptive cyberattacks could potentially delay our ability to regain practice normalcy. As you make decisions about your practice and with the potential for long-term closures, please consider the following mitigation strategies to reduce the risk of a potentially crippling cyberattack.

Here are some items to consider about your practice's cyber security.

- **Data Backup:** If you are able, backup any and all practice data on an external hard drive.
- **Phishing Attacks:** Be extremely careful when receiving any emails related to COVID-19.
- **Identify the Warning Signs:** [Click here for five signs of a COVID-19 Phishing email.](#)

Learn more about [how to protect your practice's cyber security here.](#)

### **Elective vs. Non-Elective Procedures**

As many doctors are shutting down their offices to elective procedures, AAO members have requested specific guidelines for what constitutes elective vs. non-elective procedures. It is important for individual practices to use their best judgment when determining what procedures to continue.

As a general guideline, non-elective procedures, including those considered to be orthodontic emergencies, are defined as remedying one or more of the following:

- Significant oral pain (*Please note that many patient "emergencies" can be managed by wax or sectioning an archwire with cuticle cutters/nail clippers.*)
- Infection
- Limited function
- Physically traumatic event yielding the above

### **Patient Blog Resource**

While practices around the world adjust to the outbreak of the Coronavirus, it can be challenging to communicate with your patients about this ongoing challenge. For this reason, the AAO has posted a blog item on the consumer site entitled, [My Orthodontist's Office Is Closed, What Does That Mean for My Treatment?](#)

This informal article covers what your patients should expect over the next few weeks, potential delays in treatment and other COVID-19-related information. Check out the [AAO Consumer blog](#) for more patient resources.

**Is a member of your team experiencing coronavirus-related stress?**

For help coping with coronavirus and assisting your team members and patients, [here](#)

[are some important mental health resources.](#)

The **AAO Coronavirus Resource Center** will be updated regularly to provide you with the most up to date information and resources to help you navigate this situation. Please share your thoughts and additional questions with us at [Coronavirus@aaortho.org](mailto:Coronavirus@aaortho.org).

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