

Defining Emergent, Essential (Urgent), and Non-Essential (Elective) Care in Dentursim

Dental healthcare providers rely on their professional judgment and clinical expertise to make decisions in the best interests of their patients. As a regulator, CDHC normally avoids providing prescriptive, clinical advice because we recognize that professionals have the training and the expertise to make decisions and provide care based on the unique needs of each individual patient.

However, under the lens and pressure of a pandemic, we recognize dental healthcare providers and patients will sometimes want and require more detailed guidance.

Much concern has been expressed about determining and defining the differences between emergent, essential (urgent) and non-essential (elective) care.

As professionals, we need to make decisions and provide care in ways that will decrease the burden on hospital departments, allowing them to focus on the critical support of patients affected directly by this viral infection.

By limiting the types of care provided and respecting the need for social distancing and subsequent transmission, we can help flatten the curve of transmissibility and prevent overwhelming these facilities. As well, *by managing and providing emergent and essential care, denturists can help solve patient concerns before they may reach the level of hospitalized care.*

CDHC has strongly recommending that provision of all non-essential (elective) care be suspended immediately. To help practitioners better interpret this recommendation, we provide the following definitions of emergent, essential (urgent) and non-essential care.

EMERGENT CARE

Emergency dental care is defined as potentially life-threatening conditions requiring immediate management or treatment *to alleviate severe pain.*

ESSENTIAL (URGENT) CARE

Essential care is separate from emergency care and focuses on the management and treatment of conditions that require immediate attention to relieve pain.

NON-ESSENTIAL (ELECTIVE) CARE

Non-essential care is routine or non-urgent procedures and would include (but not limited to):

- Recall examinations
- Restorative dentistry
- Aesthetic dental procedures