

Splatter and Aerosol Moderation Procedure

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Department: **Dental**



**RELATED POLICY: NONE**

**PROCEDURE:**

Many dental procedures have the potential to create contaminated splatter and/or aerosols. Splatter is defined by airborne particles that behave in a ballistic manner such that they are only suspended in the air for as long as it takes gravity to pull them into contact with a surface. Aerosols, by comparison, are smaller particles which allows the particles to stay airborne for extended periods of time before they settle on a surface.

HealthLinc classifies the following dental procedures as having a higher probability of generating aerosols:

* Surgical dental extractions
* Restorative procedures
* Periodontal scaling and root planing
* Debridement
* Periodontal scaling in the presence of moderate to severe gingival inflammation
* Fixed partial denture preparation including single crowns

The procedures, themselves, do not necessarily create the aerosols, however the instruments that are commonly necessary during their execution can create the undesirable aerosols. These instruments include

* Ultrasonic/piezo electric scalers
* Air-water syringe
* Air turbine powered dental handpieces
* Surgical dental handpieces

The generation of the aerosol contamination can be mitigated by implementing the following procedure modifications:

* Prohibition of utilization of ultrasonic/piezo electric scalers
* Minimization of the use of air/water syringe during procedure
* Isolation of the teeth with a rubber dam
* Utilizing high volume evacuation

The procedures that are unable to be completed without a rubber dam or an ultrasonic/piezo electric scaler must be completed in an isolated environment such that the aerosol generated is contained for sufficient time to allow for the airborne particles to fall to the surfaces and not spread through the environment. This takes three (3) hours. Every effort should be made to predict the procedures that could potentially require the generation of dental aerosols and schedule these procedures at the end of the clinic’s hours of operation. In the event that a procedure unexpectedly requires the generation of aerosols that cannot be mitigated, the procedure should be moved to an operatory that has a door that can be closed.

HealthLinc classifies the following dental procedures as having a low probability of generating aerosols

* Removable prosthodontics
* Endodontic therapy
* Non-surgical extractions
* Dental prophylaxis without coronal polishing
* Dental exams
* Fixed partial denture delivery

These procedures are less likely to generate aerosols, however they are still capable of generating splatter. Splatter poses an infection control risk only in the operatory it is generated within. To mitigate the contamination in these cases, HealthLinc will limit the number of people in the dental operatory and require that they wear a mask for the duration of the time they are in the clinic. HealthLinc will also utilize plastic barriers while maintaining strict surface disinfection procedures as described in the Dental Pre and Post-Procedure Room Set-up document.

**RELATED PROCEDURES:** [Dental Pre and Post-Procedure Room Set-up](https://healthlincchc.policytech.com/docview/?docid=3168)

**RELATED FORMS: NONE**