
DDSD Guidance Document
Going to Routine Medical or Dental Appointments
6/25/2020

This Guidance document is intended for use by people receiving services from DDSD, their families, guardians, Direct Support Staff, and Agencies. Many medical, dental, day surgical and other acute ancillary providers are re-opening and have been rescheduling appointments for routine visits and more complex medical procedures.

This document is intended to give a broad overview of what you can expect before and during these appointments. Although there may be minor differences in protocols, all medical providers are required to honor COVID-19 Safe Practices.

1. It is important that everyone is informed of the specific protocols used at the office or clinic they are going to.
 - a. Offices are calling several days before the appointment as a reminder and to go over specific instructions.
 - b. Make sure to communicate these specific instructions to the person and to the staff or family that will be attending the appointment.
 - c. During this call it's important to communicate with the office staff that the person has an intellectual and/or physical disability and will have to be assisted by at least one staff person. Ask them to make a note of this on the record. This is important whether or not it is a new provider or someone who has seen them in the past. Some offices have hired new staff to help with scheduling and screening. Ask if the office wants a co-pay before or at the time of the appointment.
 - d. Take some time to go over what to expect with the individual in your care. Talk about using a mask and sitting apart from other people.
 - e. Make sure you have a current Health Passport and Physician Consultation form ready to take to the appointment.
2. Many offices only allow one person to accompany a person who is disabled. Try to limit the number of people attending the appointment to the minimum needed to support the person. Don't be surprised if someone is asked to wait in the car.
3. Everyone must wear a face mask. If the person cannot tolerate a mask, have one ready just in case and be prepared to let the clinic staff know why they cannot wear a mask. Practicing using a mask ahead of time can be really helpful.
4. Ask what time to arrive. The clinics know how long it takes to screen for COVID-19, get admitted and get to the waiting areas. You may be asked to call from the car when you arrive or proceed to a tent area for screening. Ask if you can go into a waiting room or if you need to stay in the car until you are called.
5. If you arrive too early before the stated appointment time, you may be asked to wait until prior patients are cleared from the area. During hot weather make sure the vehicle's air conditioner is operating effectively. If having water is allowed before the appointment, be sure to bring some with you. Be sure the person does not have to be NPO (nothing by mouth) before the appointment!

6. Screening for COVID-19 exposure and symptoms will be completed for everyone. This may be done by clinic staff in the car, in a tent or at the entry way. Providers are using a checklist similar to the one used in the DDS homes. Screening and temperatures will be taken for the person and whoever goes with them into the clinic. Screening may also be done for anyone else who came with the person.
7. If the person or anyone with them has a fever or symptoms, they likely will not be allowed into a routine appointment. However, if the appointment is due to the person being sick, be ready to talk about why you are there and what has been happening. Always have a current Health Passport and Physician Consultation form with you at every appointment.
8. Most offices have markers on the ground for waiting to help people stay 6 feet apart. Many have moved furniture or have taped off seating areas. Respect social distancing when checking in and when waiting. If you need to take an elevator, try not to get into one that has a lot of other people already in it. Be aware that some people do not respect social distancing. Be ready to step to one side or stand still if someone passes too close.
9. Things change. If you become aware at any time (even at the last minute) that the client, or a caregiver (a family member or staff) is sick with COVID-19 symptoms (fever over 100.4, cough, chills, body aches, etc.) or has an exposure to COVID-19, please let the provider know! Don't go to the clinic. Call and cancel the appointment. The goal is protecting everyone from getting or sharing this very contagious virus.
10. If you are in doubt, call the providers office or clinic and talk to them about your concerns about COVID-19 illness or exposure. Call the Agency Nurse to keep them informed about what is happening if anyone may be ill or exposed at any time.