

To my dear NOVA Pediatric Dentistry & Orthodontics patients and families,

I hope this email finds you well as you adjust to our “new normal”. The purpose of this correspondence is to update you on the current status of the office closure and provide some tips, guidance, and answers to frequently asked orthodontic questions during this time.

As of today, March 26, Governor Northam has ordered all medical/dental practices to cease all non-emergency procedures until **April 24, 2020. This prohibits all orthodontic procedures that are not absolute emergencies (severe pain or risk of infection)**. The goal of this mandate is to help curb the spread of infection of the virus and preserve personal protective equipment (gloves, masks, gowns) for the hospitals and assisted living facilities that are dangerously close to running out of these much needed supplies.

I have formulated a strategic and comprehensive plan to ensure that your treatment needs are tended to as best as possible during this time.

I have set aside office hours from my home starting next week, March 30th from 11:00-1:00 pm. If you have any questions or concerns about your orthodontic treatment, please email me at drcourtney@novasmilestogether.com with: your full name, the patient's full name, the best date for you to talk, your question/concern, and any pertinent photos (see guidelines below).

Here are some general treatment guidelines based on the type of treatment you/your child is currently undergoing:

EXPANDER PATIENTS:

- I will be reviewing your chart and sending you a text message as to whether you should continue turning or stop until we are able to see you.
- Please email me if you have any questions. If you think a photo would be helpful, please take a photo of the top teeth, bottom teeth, and a photo straight on of your child biting on his/her back teeth. Here is an example:



BRACES PATIENTS:

- The wires are safe and stable in your mouth. This one missed visit will not extend your treatment time.
- Be extra careful with the foods that you eat. Stay away from sticky and chewy foods as I am unable to repair broken brackets at this time.
- If you have a bracket come off, it is okay. As long as you are not experiencing discomfort, we will repair it at your next visit. If it is uncomfortable please call me on my cell phone (814.688.0861) and I will try to walk through with you how to resolve the situation at home
- If you have a pokey wire, try to trim it using cuticle scissors or nail clippers. Please reference our practice Facebook page for tips. If you are still having a problem, please reach out to me on my cell phone (814.688.0861). I will try to walk you through a variety of solutions to get you/your child comfortable.

BRACES PATIENTS WEARING RUBBER BANDS

- Please wash your hands prior to changing your rubber bands and continue to wear the elastics as prescribed. If you do not feel comfortable wearing rubber bands at this time, you can stop and we will resume in the future.
- If your bite does not feel right and you are wondering if you should continue to wear the rubber bands, please take photos of your teeth and email them to me (drcourtney@novasmilestogether.com) I will review the photos and reach out to you with instructions as to what to do.



- TIPS: you can use spoons to get the cheeks out of the way in the photos, also make sure the flash is on!
- If you run out of rubber bands, please email me (drcourtney@novasmilestogether.com). I have a supply of rubber bands and will mail them to your house.

INVISALIGN PATIENTS:

- Wash your hands before taking the aligners in/out. Continue to wear your aligners as prescribed if possible.
- Because the recommendations to avoid touching your face are important, if you would feel more comfortable you can switch to wearing your aligners 12 hrs/day HOWEVER if you choose to do this, you MUST DOUBLE your aligner changing interval. For example, if you currently wear your aligners all the time and change them every week, but now have decided to wear them only 12 hours a day you must now wear each aligner for 2 weeks. If you were changing every two weeks, you must now wear each aligner for 4 weeks.
- If you get to the point that you are on your last set of aligners, please transition from wearing them all the time to wearing the last aligners at night (every night!).

RETAINER PATIENTS:

- Continue wearing your retainers as prescribed.
- If you were scheduled for your 2-month retainer check and would be transitioning to night-time wear at this point, you may do so. Please remember that if the retainers are feeling tight, they need to be worn more frequently.
- If a retainer is lost, cracked, broken, or not fitting please email me (drcourtney@novasmilestogether.com). I will put you on the list to have the team call you when the office reopens to have a new retainer made.

When we are able to re-open, we will be extending our hours and number of days of patient care to accommodate the missed appointments. Our team will be hard at work to ensure that your treatment time is not extended/affected by the office closure. We understand that this, too, will be a trying time as patients are going to want to be seen as soon as possible. Please know that I will be looking at the chart of each patient who had an appointment cancelled as a result of this pandemic (appointments scheduled March 17-April 24) to determine the order in which patients should be seen. This is in an effort to keep all patients on track to finish treatment on time. Jam, Jhoan, and the entire orthodontic team will do their very best to accommodate you. Thank you in advance for your flexibility, patience and grace.

I miss the old “normal”. I miss interacting with my team and with all of you. Decisions I have been forced to make during this unprecedented time are the hardest of my professional life. The safety of our patients and team will always be my highest priority. I will continue to keep you updated with any changes and deeply appreciate your cooperation and understanding. Please know that I am here for you. Reach out to me on Facebook, through email, through office voicemail (I’m the one checking those messages these days), or on my cell phone (814.688.0861) if I can help you in any way.

Wishing you all good health and a speedy return to normal,

Dr. Courtney Ullrich