



Dr. Veda Afsahi wears a protective face guard at her dental office on Slater Avenue near Ward Avenue. Her setup also includes an air purifier and other safety measures.

Photo by LYNN SEEDEN/Seeden Photography

By **CURT SEEDEN**
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During a time when we are all asked to cover our faces, the thought of performing needed dental work may seem daunting for dentists and patients alike.

As it stands, dentists and orthodontists have always followed rigid hygiene protocols. But the COVID-19 pandemic presents the need for extensive safety enhancements.

We asked two of our *Fountain Valley Living Magazine's* advertisers—orthodontist Dr. Matt Nisco, and dentist Dr. Veda Faith Afsahi—to talk to us about what their patients can expect when the time comes for their dental needs to be addressed.

“Over the past few weeks, we have performed staff training along with

implementation of new equipment and protocols to optimize protection for patients, staff, and the community in general,” Dr. Nisco said. “You will see enhancements that meet or exceed guidelines from the California Dept. of Public Health and our Dental Societies.”

Noted Dr. Veda: “First and foremost, prior to COVID-19, our dental office had infection control procedures in place to assume that every patient is potentially contagious. Many viruses do not have symptoms in the incubation stages, and we follow all OSHA, CDA, ADA, and CDC recommendations and updates.”

If you have an appointment with Dr. Nisco, this is what to expect:

The morning of your appointment you will be emailed and texted two forms to complete either on your smart phone or computer. They are cloud-based, HIPPA compliant and will link directly to your orthodontic chart in our office.

Upon reaching the office parking lot, patients should remain in their cars and text or call to check in. They will be texted or called to proceed up to the office once a chair has been prepared specifically for the patient’s visit.

Patients should wear a mask to the front door and while they are in the office. A patient can remove the mask once in the chair and replace the mask until exiting the office. Patients under 10 years of age should be accompanied by an adult to our door and at your option throughout the appointment. The adult will need to complete the same forms as the patient.

Patients will be greeted at the front door, have their temperature taken, and be escorted directly to a treatment chair.

“These protocols will likely evolve over time in parallel with newer Health Department guidelines over the weeks and months ahead,” Dr. Nisco said.

Dr. Veda told us about protocol at her office:

"We have participated in numerous seminars and webinars, and receive updates daily on any changes in protocols for infection control and screenings," Dr. Veda said.

"When the patient calls for an appointment, Dayna (office manager) has a list of screening questions and informs the patient that he or she must wear a mask at the time of their appointment and will have their temperature taken. When confirming patient appointments, the patients are screened again over the phone.

"When the patients arrive for their appointment, they call our office and Dayna will tell them when to come into the lobby to make sure it is clear

of patients.

"When the patient comes into the lobby they keep their mask on, get the touchless temperature of their forehead, use the touchless hand sanitizer and use the sanitized pens to fill out and sign the screening sheet with the same questions asked over the phone the day before.

"When the patients are seated in the dental chair they can remove their masks.

"Physical changes in the office include: clear shield barriers around the front desk to protect the office manager; air purifiers throughout the office; high level masks, face shields, and gowns."

At both offices, all magazines, brochures, and communal items are removed as to not cross contaminate.



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Kelsey Fitzmaurice, office coordinator at Dr. Matt Nisco's orthodontist office, checks the temperatures of those entering the office.