



# The IDAK Sentinel

Helping you keep your guard up against COVID 19

Issue No.1



Dr.Rajesh Alexander

# President's Message

The COVID-19 pandemic represents an unprecedented global public health crisis. Oral health professionals, dental associations and regulatory bodies are facing diverse challenges to continue providing dental care and promoting the oral health of the population, while at the same time protecting patients and practitioners from the health threat posed by SARS-CoV-2. There is an ongoing effort to better understand disease transmissibility, infectivity, and severity associated with this pandemic.

Today we are delighted to bring out an online series of articles on Covid-19, "The IDAK Sentinel" which contains guidance for public as well as oral health professionals and other resources relating to the COVID-19 pandemic exclusively brought about by clinicians' from various dental specialties within IDAK-Indian Dentist's Alliance in Kuwait.

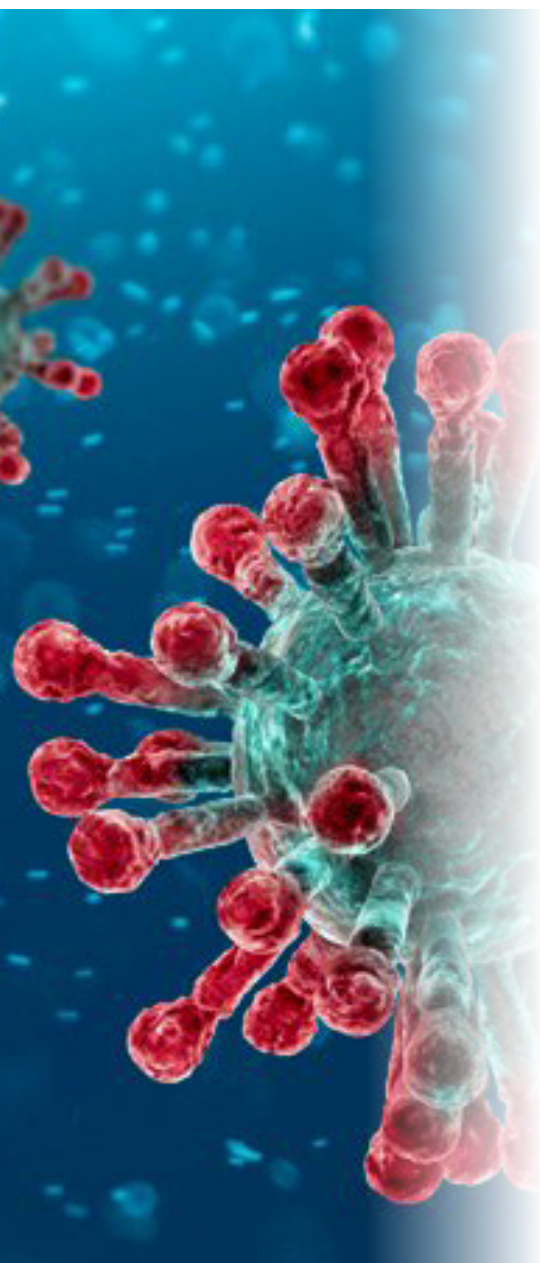
The role of dental professionals in preventing the transmission of COVID-19 is critically important. The speed of reaction and type of response to this disease around the world have been very variable according to differing healthcare systems, economies and political ideologies. The New York Times reminded the world that dentistry had the most risk of any profession in relation to COVID-19. However, how much risk to dental care professionals is acceptable during the COVID-19 pandemic?

I would also like to express my sincere gratitude to Dr. Mohammed Al Dashti, President KDA-Kuwait Dental Association & HE Sibi George-Ambassador of India to the state of Kuwait and all of the officials of the Indian Embassy Kuwait for their unconditional & continued support provided to us. "The IDAK Sentinel" is a treasure of information & I take this opportunity to thank Dr. Devi Priya & her team for their tireless effort. I would like to express our profound gratitude & pray for the good health of His Highness Amir of Kuwait & His Highness Crown Prince of Kuwait.

Last but not the least I thank every IDAK member for their kind hearted contribution & pray for the safety of their families .

Jai Kuwait.....Jai Hind.....Jai IDAK !

Dr.Rajesh Alexander  
President-IDAK







# Message from General Secretary

**Dr. Jacob Lonappan**

The world has reached a pivotal point in the fight against COVID-19 pandemic. As vaccines roll out in a phased manner, on one side, several countries are experiencing second and third waves of the pandemic. The return to normal is no doubt a gradual process.

It is commendable that dentists worldwide have risen to the challenge. We, the dentists at IDAK, have also provided services in various ways to reduce the strain on the health care sector. Right from contact tracing at the start of the pandemic to various charity services provided to the needy, IDAK's role has been largely appreciated. We, together as a team, have proven our resilience amidst the crisis and are emerging stronger than before.

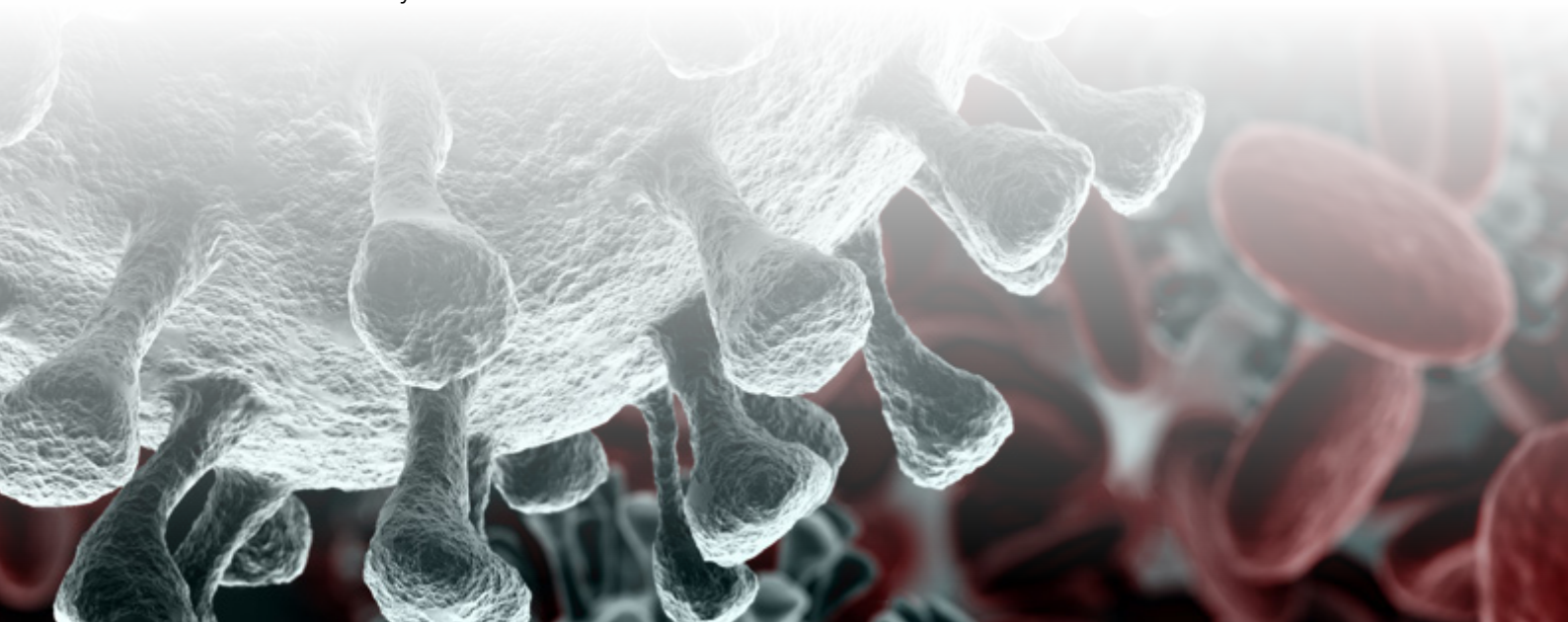
Today, it gives me immense pride and pleasure to pen a message for "The IDAK Sentinel" series released by the editorial team of IDAK. A series of articles and relevant resources pertaining to COVID-19 that would help you to hold your guard against the disease as communities around the world respond to the rapidly evolving situation.

On behalf of IDAK, I would like to congratulate the editorial team led by Dr. B. Devi Priya for this stellar job. I also take this opportunity to appreciate all the executive members for their tireless work despite this uncertain situation. I thank all my fellow council members who have proved an asset and whose dedication has kept the association thriving under the clouds of the pandemic.

I hope and pray that all of us sail and swim through these unusual times safe and healthy.

Happy Reading.

Dr. Jacob Lonappan  
General Secretary-IDAK





# From the Editor's Desk



Dr. B. Devi Priya

It is with great pride and immense pleasure that the Indian Dentists Alliance of Kuwait present the **"IDAK Sentinel"** series on topics related to Coronavirus disease.

Since the onset of the COVID-19 global pandemic, much of what was initially believed about the virus has changed. It's been nearly 10 months since the WHO (World Health Organisation) first declared COVID-19 as a pandemic disease on March 11, 2020. With a total of more than 86 million cases reported worldwide so far and nearly 1.87 million deaths as of January 1, 2021, COVID -19 has changed life as we know it as it swept across the globe.

Now more than ever, in this digital age, it has become an individual responsibility to verify information and think twice before we share our knowledge to anyone. It has truly been a testing time where the world must deal with a pandemic and an infodemic at the same time.

An infodemic is when there is an overabundance of misinformation through several platforms, either online or offline, that undermines the public health efforts to address an emergency. The dissemination of wrong information with or without the intention to mislead, is considered disinformation or misinformation respectively. Both lead to increased noncompliance to public health measures and loss of lives, lack of appropriate trust and confidence for public health interventions, which are essential during a pandemic, such as testing, tracing, and vaccinations.

As researchers rushed to uncover facts about the virus, new and conflicting information was constantly released, creating confusion for the public and policymakers alike. In the beginning, knowledge was based on previous disease outbreaks, however, as research emerged, it was clear that this novel virus behaved in unpredictable ways. Additionally, since we are psychologically more likely to hang on to information that we are given first despite conflicting information that might follow, we often make a common judgment error known as anchoring bias. Now, as restrictions continue to lift and businesses reopen, it seems imperative that we pause and examine what new information has emerged and what we've learned about Covid-19 in the past months.

We are indebted to the authors who have taken their time out to pen the articles. My heartfelt gratitude to Dr. Rino Roy and other forebearers for their able guidance. I also am grateful to the wonderful bunch of ladies in the editorial team who have been my pillars. My sincere thanks to Mr. Manu for helping with the web design.

It is our mission to provide you with the most authentic information available so that you can make informed decisions in the face of the current adversity.

*Dr. B. Devi Priya*







**Dr. Devi Priya**

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# The IDAK Sentinel



## FOREWORD

As COVID-19 vaccinations continue to roll out, experts say the speedy development of an “incredibly effective” vaccine is nothing short of amazing—and it’s the first major step in ending the coronavirus pandemic. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) also states that “the combination of getting vaccinated and following recommendations to protect yourself and others will offer the best protection from COVID-19”. This includes wearing a face mask, social distancing, staying out of large crowds, and washing your hands thoroughly and frequently.

## MASKS DESPITE VACCINES:

Questions abound as to whether face masks are necessary despite vaccination. Following are some of the reasons which justify the use of masks as we continue to swim in this pandemic.

### 1. COVID-19 VACCINE IS NOT 100% EFFECTIVE:

The COVID-19 vaccines are considered highly effective, but until the pandemic is under control and public health are modified after thorough research, wearing masks in public spaces helps reduce the spread of the virus and its impact on our healthcare.

### 2. LIMITED AVAILABILITY OF COVID-19 VACCINES:

Experts estimate that it would take through Fall 2021 to get enough people vaccinated to make a significant impact on the spread of the virus. This means that both case counts, and deaths must decrease, and more space should be available in the intensive care units.

### 3. PROTECTION FROM VACCINE IS NOT INSTANT:

It would take time for the vaccine to kick in. Pfizer’s vaccine is 3 weeks apart and Moderna’s vaccine is 28 days apart. Complete effectiveness of vaccine is possible only after both doses.

### 4. ASYMPTOMATIC COVID-19 SPREAD IS A MAJOR CONCERN:

Research suggests that approximately up to 50% of COVID-19 transmission is due to people who are infected but have no symptoms of the virus.

### 5. EMERGENCE OF NEW MUTANTS OF COVID-19:

Multiple variants of COVID -19 are surfacing and whether the current vaccines can provide immunity against these variants is still to be researched.

**BOTTOMLINE: MASKS REALLY DO WORK**



# FACE MASKS

## Role in Prevention of COVID-19



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At the start of the pandemic the WHO held off on mandating masks, news articles proclaiming the limited ability of masks flooded the internet, as did calls to save protective equipment for health care workers and those in need. At first the consensus was that surgical masks were useless or might lure people into a false sense of security. On March 30, 2020, WHO officials recommended against healthy individuals wearing masks and urged people to stop buying them, claiming there were “limits to how a mask can protect you”. Months later the WHO have changed their recommendation, and we now know that any mask whether it be N95, surgical, or cloth is better than no mask.

### NEED FOR MASKS:

Masking nose and mouth of symptomatic person has been proved to be an effective way to prevent the spread of respiratory infection (Source Control). However, in the COVID pandemic, many asymptomatic patients who are unknowingly infected with Coronavirus have been reported to be infective at least two days before any symptoms arises. These non-symptomatic carriers are growing concern in controlling of Covid-19 pandemic. Therefore, World Health Organization (WHO) recommends wearing mask for asymptomatic individual. This article discusses different types of masks and their uses for general public.

### Types of Masks for the General Public

There are different types of face mask which can be divided based on their material and filtering capacity.

#### 1- Fabric mask/ Cloth Mask/ Non-Medical Mask (Fig.1)

- It is made up of cotton or another common textile.
- Easily available, low cost, reusable
- Single / Double/ Multiple layers, with or without removable filter, limited filtering capacity
- Filtering Capacity - Filter only large droplets (Mainly source control)
- No standardization required.

### Recommendations-

- In public places like grocery store, Public transport, other public setups etc.
- Usually for healthy/ asymptomatic individuals. It can be used by symptomatic person, only if no availability of surgical mask.
- Wash daily with detergent and hot water (60 °C).
- Don't use if wet, physically damaged, soiled or contains visible body secretions.

### Limitations-

- Not resistant to fluid
- Cannot protect from small droplets and aerosols
- Not tested medically.
- Danger of leakage of air around the edges if fit is loose



**Fig.1 - Fabric/Cloth Mask**

## 2- Surgical mask/Medical Mask (Fig.2)

- 3 layers or 3 Ply (Fig.3)
  - First/outer layer – Non-woven fabric
  - Mid Layer- Filter (Melt blown polymer usually- polypropylene)
  - Inner Layer- woven and Smooth
- Fluid Resistant
- Effective barrier for capturing large droplets of saliva or respiratory secretions released from the mouth and nose of wearer. (Source control)
- Protect wearer from large droplets, splashes, spray or other body fluid & secretions. (Prevention)

### Recommendations-

- In public places, grocery store, shopping malls, public transport, hospitals etc.
  - For health care personnel performing non-Aerosol generating procedures.
  - Disposable- discard after use/ wet/ visible blood or secretion/ physically damage
- Limitations-
- Cannot protect from Aerosols / airborne particles.

**Fig.2 - Surgical Mask**





**Fig.3- Showing three layers of Surgical Mask**



The other types of masks generally used and intended for health practitioners would be detailed in the next issue of IDAK Sentinel.

**Who should wear face mask?**

All people should wear facemask except:

- Young children who are less than 2 years
- Patients who are suffering from breathing difficulty such as COPD, active Asthma patients etc.
- Any individual who is unconscious, developmental disabilities or physically/ mentally so disabled that he cannot remove mask by himself.

It is recommended to wear cloth mask/fabric mask by general population if they are asymptomatic. However, surgical masks are advised for the symptomatic and risk population (Table-1).

Cloth/ fabric Mask	Surgical Mask
Anyone who is above the age of 2 years except the categories that are explained above as an exception.	Symptomatic individual even with mild symptoms of Covid-19 such as mild body ache, sore throat, burning eyes, loss of appetite, shortness of breath, nasal congestion, sneezing, headache, diarrhea, nausea, vomiting, loss of smell and taste coughing, fever etc.
	Caregiver of suspected Covid-19 patients/ Covid-19 positive at home or non-hospital setting.
	High risk population- People age 60 years or above/ with any pre-existing medical conditions like Diabetes Mellitus, Hypertension, Cardiac/lung problems, Cancer, Immunocompromised patients etc.

**Table-1**

Myths and facts related to face mask during pandemic of Covid-19 (Table-2)



**Table-2**

Myths	Facts
Only sick people should wear mask.	All people who are above 2 years of age should wear mask except some who are described above.
Only N95 or respirator should be used by general public	Cloth mask is recommended for general public; however, sick, caregiver or risk population should use surgical mask.
Mask should wear everywhere when people are outside their home.	Mask should be used when someone is at public place which is crowded/ confined and physical distance of 1 meter is difficult to maintain. It is NOT recommended to wear mask when people are alone or at isolated place, for example driving alone, large public parks or any other place where 1-meter distance can be maintained.
Mask should be used while exercising, jogging or swimming.	People should NOT wear masks while exercising, jogging or swimming as masks may reduce the ability to breathe comfortably. Sweat can make the mask wet more quickly which makes it difficult to breathe.
Cloth mask need not to be washed.	No, mask collects microbes so they should be washed after every use or at least once in day with detergent and hot water.
N95 or surgical mask can be reused multiple times without considering their condition.	No, these masks are ideally for single use; however, due to limited supply and increased demand it is recommended to reuse them following certain guidelines provided by health authorities.
Loose-fit also works well.	No, ideally mask should be snugly fit but allow comfortable breathing. Smaller mask should be considered for children.
Mask alone can protect people from getting infected with Covid-19.	No, face mask is just a protective measure which is effective with other measures like Physical distancing of at least 1 meter and meticulous hand hygiene.

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