



# Life in the CV 19 Era

## Going to the dentist for routine cleaning

Report on the New Normal Day

July 15, 2020

Mississauga, ON, Canada

Tibi and I were scheduled from before CV-19 to have our trimestrial teeth cleaning for June 15, 2020. The dental cabinets just opened close to this date and when asked if we are going to keep the appointment Tibi said **NO** and requested rescheduling for July 15, a month later. I guess he figured that in a month they will have the disinfection/ distancing/ etc. down to a science.

I'm not sure about you but my days seem to run one into the other punctuated by my grandmotherly commitment to take care of Cyrus 2 days each week. I don't really know and to be honest don't even care What day of the week it is. It doesn't matter. As far as having a happy break with Cyrus, while tiring it is the most rewarding thing I do. He calls me on the portal and we end up spending more time together than the 2 days I committed.

But back to the trimestrial cleaning.

Of course we did drive there. We used to take the train/metro etc. and make what Tibi called a port day (the day when the cruise ship is in port as opposed to the day when one happily is on the boat somewhere in the middle of the ocean) out of it. We are not that fearless, the privacy of the car seemed as a safer option.

I made incredible time, on the roads maybe half of the previous traffic. It is a pleasure to drive. Even the drivers seem more subdued and polite but it might be only a temporary situation or a lucky break.

We arrived early. Parked our car in the usual parking spot near our favourite Thai restaurant. The parking was also scarcely populated. The price of it has increased.

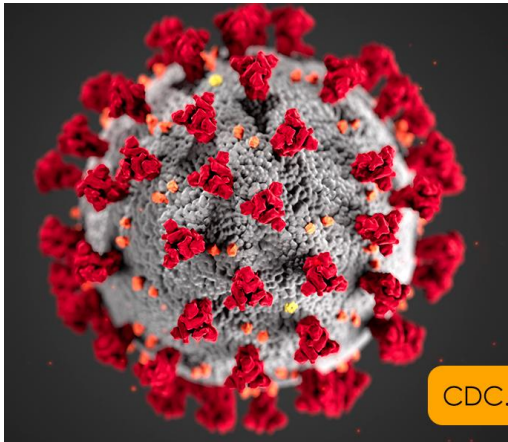
We managed to find even a shady place after Tibi evaluated the Sun's position and its evolution through out the day. He was as usual correct.

Our dentist's cabinet is on the 7th floor. The movement in/out of the building was clearly marked. Everywhere plenty of instructions on what not to do. You don't even need to know how to read, everything is illustrated with cute human figures masked and big red X es indicating what is forbidden.

In the elevator, on the floor, two circles indicate where one should position himself. 2 people per ride. Luckily we were together. No other souls in site rushing to their encounter with destiny.

The door at the doctor's cabinet was open and a padded long bench stopped us from entering. The receptionist came, asked me to remove my hat, and took my temperature. I was asked **how I feel** - I didn't answer the truth - **intimidated**. **Did I travel** - to this one I could honestly answer - **unfortunately not**. **The rest** of the detailed questions, fatigue, diarrhea, cough all got her the expected **NO**. I was asked to sign a disclaimer given my age. It stated that while they take every caution possible they can't guarantee anything. Who can? Who expects them to offer guarantees?

I was admitted and escorted to meet the hygienist. She is a very nice lady with a very soft touch. We know each other for a long time.



The beautiful image that changed the world as we know it. CV-19.

I was told the cleaning protocol has changed, no more polishing and, some no more something else. I just wanted this to be over already.

She went and changed into a yellow gown. I presume that was a gown to be used only when treating me. She came back wearing a mask and a face shield. I was handed some dark glasses to protect my eyes from the increased lighting. Must be difficult to work through mask, shield, and fear of infection. Her touch was still gentle. From time to time she would wipe my teeth with a piece of gauze. I managed to relax. Was nothing else to do.

We were nearly done when tragedy struck. I have on my lower front teeth a wire that helps the teeth stay together. The wire is glued on two sides to my cuspids, on the right side the tooth is covered by a crown. 2 different types of glue have to be used to fix the wire, on the left side glue bonding on a live tooth on the right side glue bonding on the crown or artificial tooth. Well, the right side didn't like the manipulation, the wire was probably already loose. The glue detached with the wire still cemented in it. As my dentist is not glueing wires a call was made immediately to his brother the orthodontist and the one that has placed the wire years ago. It was not the first occurrence of unglueing. It was the first occurrence of unglueing in the CV-19 era.

I was lucky - I'm a lucky person I guess. The brother just had a cancellation. I got the chance to see how the orthodontist implemented the CV-19 protocols.

I made my way to the orthodontist. His cabinet is located in an adjacent building, 11th floor. The younger brother is a technology buff and we have often in the past discussed computers, image processing, smart devices. We are both die-hard Apple product aficionados.

The door to his cabinet was shut close. On it a note with a phone number and advice to text to the phone number my arrival. I will be texted back a questionnaire to fill. The receptionist will come and after taking my temperature and provide sanitizer for my hands if deemed OK I will be invited in. For no texting patients, the low tech option to knock on the door still exists.

While I know how to text, I choose the low tech option. As a good analyst, I realized that technology has still limitations. No amount of texting can replace the human interaction. I needed to go in, open my mouth and have the darn wire glued.

The receptionist decided I'm probably a safe bet to be admitted. She mentioned that they are not ready for me yet. I can wait 15 minutes in front of the door or in the chair. I didn't even bother to answer, just stared at her. She looked at my eyes (half of my face obviously covered by the made in China bought at Costco disposable masque (~0.50\$ a piece) and I was happy to see I still have the ability to use my eyes to convey what I think. She opened the door and let me in.

As I mentioned before the cabinet is very well equipped with technology. From my chair, I could either admire the view - spectacular from the 11th floor or the CTV news running on mute on the TV over the chair. The news of jour lifted my spirits. they were announcing proudly the first day without new cases of Coronavirus in Mississauga. Things were looking up. In the background, various officials briefed the public. It looked like a pantomime, a lady came took off her white masque, and said something, put back her masque and left. A man in a suit with black masque came, took off his masque ,and said something else - I think. Put back his masque and left, the white masque lady came again, did her bit, went away. Man's turn ...or maybe they just looped through the briefing. As the TV was on mute and I'm not a good lip-reader I wouldn't know. In between the mute TV, the nice view, and various down masque up masque of my own when asked by the assistant to show the unglued wire the 15 minutes passed.

It was the time for the real show to begin.

Glueing the wire is a delicate operation. It is not painful but uncomfortable as one has to keep his/her mouth open and tongue away from the surface prepared for maximum adherence. The young lady doing it was very precise with her work. She reminded me often to keep my mouth open, tongue away. Her tone was firm and if I closed my eyes I could imagine easily I'm a teenager again getting my teeth fixed with braces. Too bad I was too young when my mother decided my teeth need fixing. The technique used in Timisoara in the 50s was based on patient cooperation, meaning the braces were removable and one had to wear them to work. I

did not cooperate, moreover I bit the poor dentist's hand. He was probably used to be abused by his patients. For sure it didn't improve on our relationship. My loss totally.

I managed to follow her instruction. She was very convincing when she threatened me that if I don't, she will have to start all over. I was offered water to rinse my mouth. As the spitter is not one use I was offered a cup with water and one to spit in.

I was told not to eat all the crunchy foods I like - no more sourdough bread crust, carrots, apples to bite in. I knew then and there that I will be back.

The orthodontist came to check on her work and after commiserating about the changes in our lives due to CV-19, we reaffirmed our admiration for Steve Jobs, smart devices, and what they offer. It is hard to imagine how this bleak period in my/our lives would look without technology in general and computers and the internet in particular.

After paying, more exactly tapping my Visa card another pandemic friendly innovation I was good to go.

By the time it was all over I was exhausted, hungry, and thirsty. I had enough adventures for the day. I was also full of admiration for the people that have to face the public every day knowing the potential consequences.

Tibi who had only half of the amusement and was probably more hungry than me took over. I will just say that we ate on a bench a takeout meal from our favourite Thai restaurant. It was as good as we remembered it. The take out portions were overly generous and in 2 we could only finish 3/4 of the cashew nut chicken. The Pad Thai came home to end finally in the garbage. Did I tell you I hate any kind of leftovers?