

Re opening Policy

This policy has been created based on multiple updated sources from within the dental and medical professions and the government. It outlines modifications to our normal procedures that we intend to employ once the practice is reopened after the COVID-19 pandemic peak has subsided.

It is not known at this time whether these procedures are temporary or whether they will become a permanent feature of the way dental practices must be run to ensure patient and staff safety in the future. The worldwide COVID-19 pandemic is still being evaluated and studied and policies and recommendations are likely to change in line with new scientific evidence over time.

We would like to thank all of our patients for their patience and forbearance during the period of temporary practice closure and for their understanding and cooperation whilst we implement new measures at the practice.

We will of course be providing dental care to all of our patients in the safest possible environment. We greatly appreciate your assistance with any new or modified procedures at the practice.

PROVISIONAL TIMETABLE

The practice will re-open for patients who require essential dental treatment on Monday 8th June 2020 at 11am.

The teams will prepare the practice for reopening and practicing our updated procedures before patients return to the practice. We will initially be seeing patients with emergency problems or other dental problems that require urgent assessment and treatment.

Following this we will see:

- Patients with treatment that was not completed prior to the lockdown
- Patients who were due for routine examinations and hygienist visits during the period of closure
- Patients who are due orthodontic reviews.

Patient communication before reopening

We will request that all patients who are attending update their medical history digitally. You will receive a link to do this via text or email. **Please can you ensure this is done at least 48hrs PRIOR to attending.** This allows us to ask a few important questions related to COVID-19 on your medical history form allowing us to carry out a risk assessment.

New measures to reduce the risk of covid-19 transmission

Our normal cross-infection control protocols against all previously known pathogens are already woven into all clinical activity carried out at the practice. It should be remembered that a dental practice is already a very clean environment compared to public areas and there is no evidence of COVID-19 transmission occurring in increased rates in dentists or their staff.

We have collectively evaluated all of the updated guidance and observed what measures have been put in place in other countries. We feel that the measures which are outlined in this policy will reduce risk to the minimum level at the practice. Please be assured that all of our clinical staff will also be complying with our updated procedures to reduce the risk of cross infection in both directions.

Before attending the practice

If we feel that you are at risk of having possibly been infected, even if you are asymptomatic, we will respectfully request for you to delay booking any appointments with us for at least one month.

We recommend that patients in the high-risk groups for developing complications from coronavirus delay non-essential dental treatment for as long as possible until the trend of the pandemic becomes clear. If you are in a high risk group and do require treatment we will schedule your appointment at the beginning of the day.

The practices will be operating card payment systems going forwards to avoid handling cash. When travelling to the practice, we would recommend that you limit close contact with other members of the public as far as possible. One adult is able to attend with a child; please do not bring additional family members with you unless they are happy to wait in the car or outside the building. Please ensure you use the restroom prior to attending the practice as the one in the practice will be closed.

Arriving at the practice

We intend to eliminate waiting inside the practice and at reception. Accordingly, appointments will be staggered so that patients do not arrive or leave at the same time as other patients as far as we are able to manage. **Please use the alcohol hand gel on entering the practice, which has been placed on the table by the entrance.**

Practice Procedures

The team have spent time critically looking at every aspect of the practice with a view to removing all non-essential items that can potentially be the cause of infection. You will find that the practice may appear to be quite bare when you attend.

All clinical and common areas including door handles and surfaces will be regularly disinfected in addition to our normal surface cleaning protocols between patients

Dental Procedures

All dental staff will be using personal protective equipment in line with current recommendations and evidence. We apologise in advance for the necessary reduction in social interaction that this will necessitate. Whilst our masks may make us appear impersonal and distant, please be assured we are still the same friendly team underneath it all!

We are especially mindful that many dental treatments are aerosol-generating procedures (AGP's). It is difficult for us to carry out some dental procedures without generation of some level of aerosol. Aerosol suspended in the air is a theoretical source of infection which we obviously wish to keep to a minimum.

Currently the dental literature suggests:

- Our use of our normal high-volume suction reduces aerosol production by over 90%.
- The use of dental rubber dam where possible reduces bio aerosols by a further 30 to 90%
- Our regular surgical facemasks filter approximately 60% of remaining airborne particles. FFP2 and FFP3 masks filter 94% and 99% respectively of airborne particles in both directions (patient to clinician and clinician to patient).

We therefore feel that our normal dental procedures can be carried out with minimal risk by the use of high-volume suction, rubber dam, surgical and FFP2 masks and, in aerosol generating procedures FFP3 masks as appropriate.

Despite the financial impact of the coronavirus, The practices will not be increasing its normal fees unless absolutely necessary. However, the time taken to carry out treatment sessions may need to be extended.

Summary

The vast majority of our patients are otherwise healthy without coronavirus infection and we are confident that we are able to provide dental care for these patients in as normal an environment as possible while bearing in mind our responsibilities to mitigate risks of infection spread as far as is practically possible.

This policy will be constantly reviewed and updated as necessitated by circumstances over time.