

POST COVID-19 REOPENING POLICY

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

The practice has been risk assessed and controls have been implemented. 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.

The practice is open for patients who require urgent dental treatment and priority will be given to these patients. As the lockdown restrictions are eased

We will be prioritising patients in the following order:

- Patients with a dental emergency or other dental problems that require an urgent assessment and/or treatment.
- Patients with treatment needs that were not completed prior to lockdown where possible.
- Patients requiring routine appointments such as examinations and hygiene appointments

Treatment requiring Air Generated Equipment will be assessed on its necessity and some treatments may be postponed for a while

PATIENT COMMUNICATION BEFORE REOPENING

We will request that all patients who are attending the Practice update their medical and dental history forms beforehand. These forms will now be in electronic format and we will only provide paper forms as a last resort.

The assessment forms now include a pre-screening form, which will allow us to assess your level of risk for Coronavirus before you attend the practice.

BEFORE ATTENDING THE PRACTICE

We will carry out a pre-attendance assessment over the phone, complete a medical history and assessment forms the day before your appointment and, if necessary, a follow-up telephone conversation to assess relative coronavirus infection status. A dentist may also carry out a telephone consultation with you to assess your dental problem, prior to your visit so that a treatment plan can be derived.

If we feel that you are at a risk of having coronavirus, even if you are asymptomatic, we will respectfully delay your booking of any appointments with us for at least 14 days.

We recommend that patients in the high risk groups for developing complications from coronavirus delay non-urgent 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 emergency treatment, we will schedule your appointment at the beginning of the day. To find out whether you are in a high or very high group, please visit: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/people-at-higher-risk-from-coronavirus/whos-at-higher-risk-from-coronavirus/>

We will be operating contactless payment systems going forwards, and we will request that payment is made online or over the telephone after your appointment. This will reduce the requirement for unnecessary contact or use of pin entries on card terminals at reception.

When travelling to the practice, we would recommend that you limit close contact with other members of the public as far as possible. We will meet patients at the door of the practice and bring them straight in to the surgery. One adult is allowed to attend with a child or adult with disabilities; please do not bring additional family members with you unless they are happy to wait in the car or outside of the building. If you are a single parent and are unable to find childcare, please do advise our reception team. Do not bring any unnecessary items with you

ARRIVING AT THE PRACTICE

The door will remain locked

We will take your temperature with a no-touch thermometer. If your temperature is above 37.8 degrees Celsius, you will be unable to enter the practice and will be asked to return home to self-isolate as per the current

government guidelines. If you have been waiting in a hot car we may try your temperature check a second time after a period of delay.

The waiting room is closed

The toilet is closed, so please use your own facilities before leaving home

Sanitizers, masks and gloves are available for you

You will be escorted straight to the surgery.

We are sorry that we will not be able to chat with you, as we would normally like to, as we are restricting the length of time that patients are in the building, in order to control the spread of infection.

You will find that the practice may appear to be quite bare when you attend.

PRACTICE PROCEDURES

All clinical and common areas, including door handles and surfaces will be regularly disinfected in between patients, in addition to our normal cross infection control procedures.

We will be providing a buffer period between patients to allow additional time for decontamination procedures, also allow for any treatments that may overrun and allow preparation time for the next patient. This will help to ensure that patients are not kept waiting unnecessarily outside of the practice. However, in some unforeseeable circumstances, dental emergencies can become more complicated than expected. We will do our utmost to keep to scheduled appointment times but given the nature of the treatments we will be providing please do accept our apologies in anticipation if we should keep you waiting.

All future appointments will be confirmed in surgery or by email, text or telephone to limit your time at reception.

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!

MOVING FORWARD WITH COVID19

We will shortly, be introducing AGP (aerosol generated procedures)

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 aerosols. Aerosols suspended in the air are theoretically a source of infection which we obviously wish to keep to a minimum. Currently, dental literature suggests:

- Our use of our normal high volume suction reduces aerosol production by over 90%
- The use of a dental rubber dam, where possible, reduces bio aerosols by a further 30 to 90%
- Our regular surgical face masks 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 using high volume suction, rubber dam when appropriate, surgical and FFP2 or FFP3 masks for aerosol generating procedures. This policy has been created based on multiple updated sources from within the dental and medical professions and government.

It outlines modifications to our normal procedures that we now employ 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. Policies and recommendations are likely to change, in line with new scientific evidence over time.