

Dear Patients,

In line with government guidelines, during the third national lockdown, we are open and seeing patients for all routine and specialist appointments.

We are a COVID-19 Secure Health Setting and will be adhering to the strict COVID-19 safe measures that we have been following since reopening on 8th June.

Dentistry is an essential medical service. Patients are entitled to travel for medical appointments, including dental.

### **Keeping you safe**

Following an in depth risk assessment and guidance from our regulatory bodies we have implemented a series of additional safety measures:

1. Installation of an extensive network of air purification systems, one in each treatment room, reception and the hallway (hospital grade HEPA filtration which removes airborne COVID-19, pollution and allergens)
2. Limiting the number of patients in the building at one time
3. COVID-19 symptom screening and temperature check for every patient, staff member and visitor before entry to the Practice
4. Hand gel on arrival and at various points around the Practice
5. Mask provided on arrival or you are welcome to wear your own
6. All medical history and contact details filled in via secure link online, prior to your appointment (alternative method available for those who do not use email or internet)
7. Perspex screen at our Reception desk
8. All the team wear masks at all times
9. Treatment rooms are disinfected to the highest standard between patients
10. Patient bathroom fully disinfected after every use
11. Communal areas and all touch points, such as door handles, are disinfected on an hourly basis.

## **FAQs**

### **What will happen when I arrive at the Practice?**

When you arrive outside (either by car or on foot), please telephone Reception on 01892 617467 to let us know you are here. When the Dentist or Hygienist is ready to see you we will call you to come to the door. Your Nurse will greet you, ask you to use hand gel and provide you with a mask if you do not have your own. The nurse will take your temperature and ask some questions related to symptoms of COVID-19.

### **Where can I park?**

You may park on our driveway if there is space. Alternatively there are a number of car parks close by. The closest is Great Hall Car Park (TN1 1QQ).

### **Do I need to wear a mask?**

Yes please, all of our team members will be wearing one too.

### **What is fallow time?**

Many of the dental treatments that we carry out are what are known as 'aerosol generating procedures'. It is for these procedures that our regulators state that we need to wear additional personal protective equipment (PPE) and allow fallow time after the procedure. Fallow time is a period of time that we have to allow to let the aerosols settle before we clean the room.

### **How does fallow time affect me?**

Fallow time means we cannot see as many patients per day as we used to, as hours of surgery time are lost to these fallow periods.

## **What is an aerosol generating procedure?**

This is when the Dentist or Hygienist uses equipment which creates a dental aerosol which is a fine mist of water. It is created when we use a dental drill or ultrasonic scaler for example.

Dental check-ups, periodontal reviews, hand scale and polish and some denture adjustments, are some examples of treatment which does not create a dental aerosol. Most other appointments, for example fillings, crowns and periodontal treatment do require the creation of a dental aerosol.

## **Why is there a PPE charge of £20 for aerosol generating procedures?**

As well as allowing fallow time, your Dentist, Hygienist and Nurse is required to wear:

- Filtering facepiece respirator masks that are completely sealed to the face and which need to be fit tested by a trained fit tester
- Full length, long sleeved gowns
- Hair covers
- Goggles or visor
- Gloves and a regular mask over the top of the filtering facepiece respirator mask

When we carry out an aerosol generating procedure we are asking patients to pay a fee of £20 to cover a small portion of the new costs. Not all dental appointments involve aerosol generating procedures. You will be informed prior to your appointment if you are having an aerosol generating procedure.

## **Are other Practices charging for PPE?**

You may have seen these fees being discussed in the media as dental practices across the country have tried to find a viable way to reopen. Sadly some Practices are not able to reopen yet and some have closed permanently as the current measures mean it is not viable for them to open.

Of the Practices that have reopened, most have made the decision to charge between £20-£40 for aerosol generating procedures, instead of increasing prices across the board. Some Practices are charging a COVID-19 surcharge for all appointments, not just aerosol generating procedures. Charging patients a £20 contribution towards PPE and fallow time for aerosol generating procedures is not a decision we have taken lightly.

### **How long will your new measures be in place for?**

We follow strict guidance from our regulators and the government. Some of our new measures will be downgraded when England's COVID-19 alert level is reduced to level 2. Like with most things during the pandemic, it is very difficult to foresee when this might happen.

### **Why might I be asked to move my appointment by 15-30 mins?**

We are trying our very best to accommodate all of our patients. If we need to book an appointment into the diary that requires fallow time, on the odd occasion it may mean we need to re-jiggle some of the other appointments that day in order to meet the requirements set out by our regulators.

### **Why do you need me to fill in a medical history before I come?**

In order to reduce touch points at the Practice, we are asking patients to fill in forms online, instead of at the Reception desk.

The medical history form that we ask you to complete enables us to obtain information necessary to provide safe and individualised care. It is for your own safety that a thorough medical history is taken and is updated regularly.

We also need to show that we are aware of the health of each patient who comes to the practice during the pandemic and that patients have signed their medical history since we reopened on 8th June.

A medical history helps to identify conditions relevant to your dental health or which could have an impact on how treatment is carried out. Patients often do not realise that a straight forward dental treatment can have serious medical implications if they have not informed us of specific medical conditions. Also, information about certain medical conditions could be vital if a medical emergency occurs in the Practice.

### **Why can't my husband/wife/family member attend my appointment with me?**

As we are limiting the amount of people who enter the building we are asking you to attend your appointment alone unless you have a carer or need support.

### **Will I be able to use the bathroom at the Practice?**

Please use the toilet before you leave home. Our patient bathroom can be opened if you do need it. Please brush your teeth before you leave home as you will not be able to do this in our bathroom.

## **What our patients visiting us during the pandemic have said**

“Excellent care before you get into the dentist, hand gel, temperature taken, shoe covers given. Dentist in full PPE. I felt very safe and relaxed to have my treatment. ”

K.H - August 2020

“I can thoroughly recommend this Practice. My care from all staff has been exemplary. The cleanliness of the premises is impressive as are the procedures in place to protect everyone from the COVID-19 virus.”

B.M – July 2020

“I felt very safe and well looked after by both the specialists who saw me and the other staff involved in my care. It was the best dental appointment I have ever had”

G.W - July 2020

“I felt very safe, the whole process was very well planned. Even down to a cotton bud to press the buttons on the PDQ! Well done everyone there, see you in November.”

A.N – July 2020