



# COVID -19 Reopening Policy

# Our Timetable

The practice will reopen for patients who require URGENT dental treatment only on Monday the 8<sup>th</sup> June 2020 with limited treatment options - Non Aerosol procedures - (those without using a drill)-due to current advice and PPE available currently.

This will be extended to other patient groups as the demand for URGENT care decreases and as advice changes. The government is still advising you to stay at home unless absolutely necessary. We can still advise and assess other problems and refer if needed.

Our team are busy preparing the practice for reopening and training our staff on the updated procedures before patients return to the practice.

## **Initially we will only be seeing:**

- ❖ Patients with emergency dental problems that require urgent assessment and treatment;

## **We will inform you when we are able to see:**

- ❖ Patients with treatment that was not completed prior to the lockdown
- ❖ Patients for routine examinations and hygienist visits
- ❖ Patients who are due orthodontics review and cosmetic treatment.

# Patient communication before reopening

- ❖ In an effort to maximise social distancing we will request that all patients who are attending MUST update their standard medical history forms beforehand.
- ❖ These forms will now be in an electronic format and we will look to limit paper forms wherever possible. There will be a standard NHS form to fill out on arrival that we ask that you **please bring your own pen** in to fill in to minimise contamination
- ❖ Please return them to us asap via [happysmiles.dentistry@nhs.net](mailto:happysmiles.dentistry@nhs.net)
- ❖ Our triage forms include a questionnaire which will allow us to assess your level of risk for coronavirus infection before you attend the surgery.

# Protocol to Reduce the Risk of Covid-19

- ❖ Our normal cross-infection control protocols at Happy Smiles against all previously known pathogens are already stringent and apply to all clinical activity carried out at the practice.
- ❖ Dental Surgeries are 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 evaluated all of the most recent guidance and measures that have been put in place in other countries.
- ❖ We are confident 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.

# Before Attending the Practice

## We will require:

- ❖ A complete and updated medical history form before your appointment, if we do not receive this medical history form we may need to cancel your appointment.
- ❖ The Dentist may also carry out a video/phone consultation with you to assess your dental problem prior to your visit so that a treatment plan and cost estimate can be sent to you. In order to reduce your risk, if your problem can be treated at home or remotely in this phase we will continue to do this especially if you are high risk for COVID 19.
- ❖ If we feel that you are at risk of having possibly been infected with COVID-19, we will respectfully request for you to delay booking any appointments with us but if there is an urgent need can refer you to an Urgent Dental Care centre.
- ❖ Patients in the high-risk groups for developing complications from Coronavirus will be asked to delay non-essential dental treatment for as long as possible until the Government advice changes and it is safer to treat you.

# Before Attending the Practice continued

- ❖ We will be operating contactless payment systems going forwards where possible and encourage you to pay by card where possible.
- ❖ This reduces the requirement for unnecessary contact or use of pin entries on card terminals at reception. All card machines will be cleaned after each use.
- ❖ You will be given an appointment time at which to arrive at the surgery
- ❖ In order to limit contact we would ask you where possible to attend alone. If you are a carer/parent or guardian we would ask that only one adult attends with the patient for the appointment; please do not bring additional family members with you.
- ❖ In order to reduce cleaning times and to improve safety, our toilet onsite can only be used in an emergency.

# Arriving at the Practice

The front door will remain locked, please do not arrive too early for your appointment.

Patients may be asked to submit to having their temperature taken at the door as part of a covid risk assessment.

When you attend the practice, we will welcome you, and ask you to follow the procedures below.

Please do not bring any personal belongings with you -try and leave jackets/coats in the car if at all possible

Please use the hand sanitiser in reception area on entering the front door

The waiting room will be clear of other patients.

Appointments times will be extended and staggered so that patients do not arrive or leave at the same time as other patients as far as we are able to manage. This will allow us time to thoroughly clean the surgery and reception after each patient visit.

# Arriving at the Practice continued

If you are well, we will direct you straight to the surgery and request that you do the following before your appointment:

- ❖ Please wash your hands for at least 20 seconds, as instructed by the hand washing information poster.
- ❖ Please maintain a minimum 2m distance from staff where possible , there will be plexiglass shielding on our reception desk and staff will be wearing appropriate PPE.
- ❖ Rubber dam or other barrier mechanisms may be used for more lengthy procedures.



# 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.

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 some level of aerosol. Aerosol suspended in the air is a theoretical source of infection which we will obviously wish to keep to a minimum.

Once the government level is safe to resume aerosol procedures we will reintroduce these , this may limit treatment options which would have been available to us previously as we have to take into account the risk of each procedure to staff and patients.

Our use of our normal high-volume suction reduces aerosol production by over 90%. Our surgical facemasks filter over 95% of remaining airborne particles.

# In Summary

The vast majority of our patients are healthy and 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 whilst 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 needed.

Finally, we would like to remind you that we will take every step to reduce the risk of Covid-19 infection, however we cannot eliminate the risk 100%.

Covid-19 can be contracted in any setting, in supermarkets, bus stops, cafes, restaurants. **Please remain alert to minimise the spread of Covid-19.**

At present we are advising **ALL** vulnerable/shielded patients and those above the age of **70** to visit us **ONLY** in case of an emergency or severe dental pain.

This is for your safety and well-being. If you have any questions regarding this policy or about your dental care at Happy Smiles Family Dental Practice please do not hesitate to contact us on: [happysmiles.dentistry@nhs.net](mailto:happysmiles.dentistry@nhs.net)

**Stay safe**

Best wishes from the Happy Smiles Family Dental Practice team