



# COVID -19 Patient Visit information

# Our Timetable

The practice is now open for patients who require URGENT dental treatment and we are beginning to see patients for some required procedures again

This will be extended to other patient groups as the demand for URGENT care decreases and as advice changes. We can still advise and assess other problems and refer if needed.

Our team have prepared the practice for reopening and have trained our staff on the updated procedures before patients return to the practice to make your visit as safe and comfortable as is practicable

## **Initially we are only seeing:**

- ❖ Patients with emergency dental problems that require urgent assessment and treatment;
- ❖ Patients with treatment that was not completed prior to the lockdown
- ❖ Some hygienist appointments with handscaler only for patients with gum problems

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

- ❖ Patients for routine examinations

# 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. If you are unable to open the forms please contact us and we can fill these in over the phone. Please return forms 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.

# Before Attending the Practice continued

- ❖ Where possible we would prefer you to use contactless payment or card to minimise cash use
- ❖ 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. Please don't come early to minimise contact with other patients
- ❖ 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 clean your hands with the provided sanitiser
- ❖ 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 with high volume suction to minimise aerosol

# 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.

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

To allow us to do aerosol procedures we are now required to allow for a set time period after each procedure before we can re-enter a room. This both limits our surgery time and means we need to plan for these procedures.

# 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.**

Although we have been advised to minimise routine appointments, if you feel that you have a high dental need ( Gum problems, Decay, Child patients) you can contact us for an assessment and advice. We can then offer an appointment if required

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