

# Dental care during COVID-19



## Information for patients

Charles Clifford Dental Services



All routine dental care was suspended by the government in March 2020 to help stop the spread of coronavirus and reduce the risk of infection during dental treatment.

We had to close our clinics because it is not possible to provide dental treatment whilst maintaining a 2 metre distance, and some dental procedures produce high levels of 'aerosol spray'. Aerosol spray is produced during these procedures when fine particles (droplets) from the mouth can become suspended in the air which can increase the risk of spreading the virus.

The government has now given the green light for dentists to open again but only once they can do so in a safe way, with the correct protective equipment.

At first we will be prioritising face to face appointments depending on the needs of patients and their vulnerability.

We are starting to contact patients and firstly provide a telephone consultation so we can discuss any problems you might have, give over the phone advice and organise when we will bring you into the clinic if this is required.

During this time, we are still providing emergency dental treatment for all of our patients.

## **What if I am shielding or vulnerable?**

For our vulnerable patients it is still recommended to limit face to face dentistry unless a problem requires treatment. If this is the case, you may be offered an appointment earlier in the day.

If you don't want an appointment just yet, let us know. This won't affect your registration with us or your access to emergency care.

## **Before your appointment:**

Before your appointment, you will be asked some screening questions. You'll be asked the same screening questions when you attend for your appointment. If you experience any symptoms of coronavirus before your appointment, please do not attend, and contact the clinic by telephone.

You will need to have a pre-booked appointment arranged. Please **do not** walk into a clinic to book one. Appointments will be managed to allow for social distancing between patients. That might mean that you're offered fewer options for scheduling your appointment. We are also allowing more time between appointments for extra cleaning after each visit.

## **At your appointment:**

When you do attend for an appointment you will notice some changes.

- Please arrive as close to your appointment time as possible, otherwise you might have to wait outside.
- If possible, please attend alone. If this is not possible, please only have one extra person with you.
- You will be asked to wear a mask into the surgery, sanitise your hands before you come in, and maintain a 2 metre social distance wherever possible.
- We will be wearing protective equipment which makes us look very different to normal.

We would like to reassure you that if you do need to attend one of our clinics for a dental appointment, you will be in good hands. One of the fundamental principles in dentistry is to prevent cross-infection. Our staff receive annual training on this topic and therefore are well prepared for the updated procedures required to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

## Treatment:

In the short term, the range of treatments we can provide is limited. We will be able to carry out routine examinations, some denture work, simple extractions, temporary fillings and scaling using hand-held instruments. Procedures which generate an aerosol spray will be avoided unless they are absolutely necessary. If this is the case, the dentist will be wearing extra protective equipment including a gown and a special mask.

We aim to provide the dental treatment you need with the minimum of risk, using equipment and techniques with a lower risk of spray. This may mean that some non-urgent procedures may be delayed until the risk of spreading the COVID-19 virus is lower.

It is likely to be some time before dental services return to normal. However we very much value the safety of all of our patients and the dental team, and we are committed to ensuring that you receive the treatment you require in the safest way possible.



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