



Post Covid-19 Re-opening Policy

This policy outlines modifications to our normal procedures that we intend to employ from 8th June 2020



POST COVID-19 REOPENING POLICY



This policy has been created based on multiple updated sources from within the dental and medical professions and the government. It outlines modifications to our normal procedures that we intend to employ on June the 8th.

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 and policies and recommendations are likely to change in line with new scientific evidence over time. We would like to thank all of our patients for their patience and forbearance during the period of temporary practice closure and for their understanding and cooperation whilst we implement new measures at the practice.

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.

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PROVISIONAL TIMETABLE

The practice will re-open for patients who require essential dental treatment on Monday the 8th of June 2020. The team will prepare the practice for reopening and practise our updated procedures before patients return to the practice.

We will initially be seeing:

1. Patients with emergency problems or other dental problems that require urgent assessment and treatment;
2. Shortly we will then see: Patients with treatment that was not completed prior to the lockdown; Patients who were due for routine examinations and hygienist visits during the period of closure; Patients who are due orthodontic reviews.

Patient communication before reopening

We will be contacting patients and confirming appointments ahead of their scheduled time. We will request that all patients who are attending the practice update their standard medical and dental history forms beforehand. These forms will now be in electronic format and we will no longer be using paper forms. The assessment forms include a new section which will allow us to assess your level of risk for coronavirus infection before you attend the surgery.



NEW MEASURES TO REDUCE THE RISK OF COVID-19 TRANSMISSION

Our normal cross-infection control protocols against all previously known pathogens are already woven into all clinical activity carried out at the practice.

It should be remembered that a dental practice is already an exceptionally 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 collectively evaluated all of the updated guidance and observed what measures have been put in place in other countries. We feel 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 in both directions.



BEFORE ATTENDING AT THE PRACTICE

We will carry out a pre-attendance assessment via your completed medical history/assessment forms at least two days before your appointment and, if necessary, a follow-up telephone conversation to assess relative coronavirus infection risk. Our staff will contact you to remind you of this if we have not received your completed forms.

If you have any difficulties with completing the forms, we can help you with this over the phone. A dentist may also carry out a video 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.

If we feel that you are at risk of having possibly been infected, even if you are asymptomatic, we will respectfully request you delay booking any appointments with us for at least one month. If we do not receive the completed questionnaire in time and we are unable to contact you, we may need to cancel your appointment. You may be charged for the appointment if we are unable to fill it at short notice as per our normal terms and conditions.

We recommend that patients in the high-risk groups for developing complications from coronavirus delay non-essential 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 treatment, we will schedule your appointment at the beginning of the day when any risk is considered to be at its lowest.

Enhance Clinics will be operating contactless payment systems going forwards, and we will request that payment is made online or over the phone for your appointment prior to you attending if you do not have a means of making contactless payment at the time of your visit. This reduces the requirement for unnecessary contact with cash 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. One adult is able to attend with a child; please do not bring additional family members with you unless they are happy to wait in the car or outside the building.

ARRIVING AT THE PRACTICE

The front door will be locked. Please ring the doorbell to allow us to welcome you into the practice. Please limit what you bring into the building.

We will take your temperature when you arrive with a no-touch thermometer. If your temperature is above 37.8°C, you will be unable to have your treatment and will be asked to return home and self-isolate as per current government guidelines.

We intend to eliminate waiting inside the practice and at reception. Accordingly, appointments will be staggered so that patients do not arrive or leave at the same time as other patients as far as we are able to manage. You will be asked to wait in your car if you are early or social distancing measures cannot be met.

Unfortunately we have had to close one of our rest rooms although one downstairs will be available. When using the rest rooms, please do your best to ensure that you leave the facilities as you would expect to find them and wash

your hand thoroughly. The rest rooms will be regularly disinfected between patients. Please advise reception once you have left the rest room.

We will direct you straight to the surgery and request that you do the following before or during your appointment:

- Use the hand sanitiser in the reception area or thoroughly wash your hands for 30 seconds with the antiseptic hand wash provided in the surgery.
- We may ask you to use a safe anti-viral mouthwash (hydrogen peroxide or hypochlorous) before some dental treatments are provided.
- Rubber dam or other barrier mechanisms will be used for more procedures than previously.

PRACTICE PROCEDURES

The team at Enhance have spent time critically looking at every aspect of the practice with a view to removing all non-essential items that can potentially be the cause of infection transmission.

You will find that the practice may appear to be quite bare when you attend. We regret that during this interim period, we will not be providing our normal tea and coffee services in the interests of reducing all opportunities for cross infection to a minimum.

All clinical and common areas including door handles and surfaces will be regularly disinfected in addition to our normal surface cleaning protocols between patients.

All surgeries have high pressure plasma air purifiers (existing HEPA filter types can only absorb particles, plasma purifiers directly kill viruses and bacteria through an electric field of up to tens of thousands of volts).

After all aerosol treatments all surgeries are fogged with hypochlorous acid and every surface thoroughly disinfected. Single use or vacuum sterilisation is used as always for all instruments.

Because we see low patient numbers to provide the highest quality care, we are able to ensure absolute best practice.

We will also be providing a buffer period between patients to allow additional time for additional decontamination procedures, allow for any treatment overruns and preparation time for the next patient so that they do not need to wait in the reception area.

All future appointments will be made and confirmed by email or telephone to limit your time spent 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!

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 aerosol. Aerosol suspended in the air is a theoretical source of infection which we obviously wish to keep to a minimum. Currently the dental literature suggests: Our use of our normal high-volume suction reduces aerosol production by over 90%. The use of dental rubber dam where possible reduces bio aerosols by a further 30 to 90%. Our normal regular surgical facemasks that you were used to seeing filter approximately 60% of remaining airborne particles and these are still appropriate for lower risk AGP, such as exams or procedures not requiring a drill handpiece. FFP3 masks filter 99% of airborne particles and will be used for the higher risk AGP.

The plasma air purifiers and new external suction machines further reduce the remaining aerosol in the room. All rooms are fogged and left fallow to make remaining aerosol negligible.

We therefore feel that our normal dental procedures can be carried out with minimal risk by the use of high-volume suction, rubber dam, surgical masks and, in aerosol generating procedures FFP3 masks or powered respirators for long appointments as appropriate.

Despite the financial impact of the coronavirus, Enhance Clinic will not be increasing its normal fees this year unless absolutely necessary. However, with AGP there will be a small additional charge to cover the required PPE and safety. (The nationally calculated cost per patient AGP procedure is considerably more than £45 and most private practices and large private dental organisations are charging £45 or more. At Enhance we feel that the practice should also contribute to the charge so our additional charge will be £22.50, and we hope to reduce or remove that charge as soon as possible).

SUMMARY

The vast majority of our patients are otherwise healthy 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 while 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 necessitated by circumstances over time.

If you have any questions regarding this policy or about your dental care at Enhance please do not hesitate to contact us on 01353 666895 or enquiries@enhancedentalspa.co.uk

