

COVID-19 REOPENING POLICY

This policy outlines the changes to our normal policies and procedures that we will be following when our practice will open after the COVID-19 pandemic peak has subsided.

The worldwide COVID-19 pandemic is still being evaluated and policies are likely to change as new scientific evidence is forthcoming.

We would like to thank all of our patients for their patience and understanding during the past few months and for their cooperation whilst we implement new measures at the practice.

We will of course be providing dental care to all our patients in the safest way possible. We greatly appreciate your cooperation with any new or modified procedures at the practice.

Our timetable

Our team will prepare the practice for reopening – practising our updated procedures before patients return to the practice.

The practice will open initially for patients who have an emergency and require urgent assessment.

We will inform you when we are able to see:

- Patients needing urgent treatment that were assessed during their emergency triage but not treated
- Patients with treatment that was not completed prior to lockdown
- Patients who were due for their routine examinations and hygienist visits during this period of closure

Protocol to reduce the risk of COVID-19

At St John's Dental Practice our normal cross infection control protocols against all previously known pathogens are always applied in all clinical activity carried out at our 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 continually evaluate all of the guidance and measures that have been put in place and 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.

Patient communication before reopening

Patients will be contacted prior to their appointments to be updated on any procedures that have been put in place. This will include checking if patients are experiencing any symptoms of coronavirus. We will explain any new patient journey so that you know what to expect when you attend.

We will request all patients who are attending must update their standard medical history beforehand. This form will have an attachment which will allow us to assess your level of risk for coronavirus infection before you see the dentist/hygienist. If we feel you are at risk of having possibly been infected – we will respectfully request for you to delay your appointment with us for at least one month.

Patients in high risk groups for developing complications from coronavirus will be asked to delay non-essential dental treatment until the risk is lowered.

Payment of treatment – we will be asking patients where possible to pay by card or contactless payment, this will reduce the need for unnecessary contact. Where card terminals are in use they will be wiped down after each use.

Patients will be asked to wait outside the practice either in their car or if on foot to arrive no more than 5 minutes prior to their appointment. You will be met and you may have your temperature checked and then taken to the surgery. Please attend on your own – no extra person to attend unless absolutely necessary, for example if you are assisting a disabled person or attending with a child. One adult to attend with a child, any other family members must wait in the car or outside.

Arriving at the practice

The front door will be locked.

When you arrive we will welcome you, please wear light clothing you can keep on throughout your appointment. Leave all personal belongings at home as we cannot accept liability for them.

If you arrive with a temperature, you will be unable to enter the building and will be asked to return home and self isolate as required by government guidelines.

The waiting room will be temporarily shut, appointments will be staggered to avoid patients arriving and leaving at the same time.

If you are well, we will direct you straight to the surgery and request that you use hand sanitiser that is provided for you at reception before and after your appointment.

We may ask you to use Peroxide mouthwash before some treatments. Rubber dam or other barrier mechanisms will be used for some lengthy procedures.

Dental procedures

All staff will be using personal protection equipment (PPE) in line with current recommendations.

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 generated (APG). It is difficult to carry out some 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*.

This policy will be constantly reviewed and updated when needed.

Finally, we would like to remind you that we will take every step possible to reduce the risk of COVID-19 infection. At present we are advising **ALL** vulnerable groups/shielded patients and those above the age of 70 to contact the practice only if they are in need of emergency treatment. This is for your own safety and well being. If you have any questions regarding this policy or about your care at St John's Dental Practice do not hesitate to contact us on:

reception@stjohnsdentalpractice.co.uk

