

FLEET DENTAL CENTRE

Appointment Guidance & COVID Updates

December 2020

What to do when attending the practice

- Prior to your appointment, you will have been asked some 'Covid questions' which are put onto your dental records. These questions will be asked again on the day of your appointment to see if there are any changes from when you booked the appointment.
- You will have been sent an email asking you to complete and return a Medical History Form. This needs to be completed and emailed back to us if possible. If you are unable to complete it, please do not bring a copy with you as we will complete it at your appointment.
- Please call the practice to let us know you have parked your car and wait in the car until we have told you to come to the practice. We do not have a waiting room at the moment so
- Please wear a face covering. It is our practice policy that everyone in the building should wear a face covering and if you do not wear one, we will not see you.
- When you come into the practice, we will give you some hand sanitiser, take your temperature and ask you the COVID questions again.
- You will then be taken up to see the Dentist who will tell you when to remove your mask.
- After your treatment, you will be brought back to reception to book your next appointments/pay and you will be escorted to exit via the back door.
- We do ask that you attend your appointment alone, unless you are bringing a child or you are a carer.

COVID-19

What we have been doing since March

The way we work has had to change dramatically since March of this year. From the end of March until the beginning of June we were only open for telephone triage appointments. We handled over 1000 calls from not only our patients, but those who are registered elsewhere but their practice was shut and those people who are not registered anywhere. We had to refer 40 patients to one of the Urgent Dental Centres (Hubs) that were set up.

Since June we have resumed face to face appointments.

Although we always had high standards of infection control, due to the virus and the close proximity of working near to mouths, we have had to take more precautions than before. Many of our procedures involve producing aerosols (they are known as AGP's) and these are particularly dangerous. This is when we have to wear the enhanced PPE (FFP3 masks, visors and gowns). These appointments also have to be longer than usual and we then have to leave the room fallow (to allow the aerosols to settle) and then be deep cleaned.

All of the above has led to us having alot less appointments per day. We used to see 30 - 40 patients per day per dentist, this has gone down to about 10 - 15 patients per dentist per day! We have tried to mitigate this by each Dentist using another room while their room is

being followed and also purchasing some air exchangers which remove the aerosols from the room quickly.

We are hoping that we will be able to return to more 'normal' dentistry in the new year when all the Dentists will return to their regular days, although we will still be having to follow the surgeries so there will be less appointments in the day.

We would like to thank all our patients for bearing with us in these very trying times and to be reassured that we are trying to get back to working normally as soon as we can.

Please find below some frequently asked questions:

I am in pain, can I be seen?

Yes!! Due to the way we now have to work, we may not be able to see you on the same day but please call us on 01252 666976 and we will give you an initial telephone triage call with a Dentist who will ask you detailed questions so that they can find out more about the problem. They may ask you to email some photos so that they can see what the problem is. Please call us if you have broken a tooth, lost a filling or have any dental problem and you are unsure if you can be seen. One of our reception team will take some details and pass them through to a triaging dentist who will deal with the call.

When will you be doing check-up's again?

Priority is being given to those patients who are in pain and need to be seen urgently. We have started to do some check-up's but in order to be fair to all our patients we will contact those who have had to wait the longest. We will go through the diary contacting patients who either had appointments cancelled in March or were due to be seen in March in the first instance. Then we will be going through the diary in turn.

Why is your Hygienist working but we can't get a check up?

Our Hygienist is working on your oral hygiene and prevention of any potential problems. A high proportion of our patients see the Hygienist regularly and therefore this service has been re-introduced so that we can help those patients keep their teeth in optimal health condition.

Why can the Hygienist only do hand scaling and polish?

Due to the aerosols that the ultrasonic scaler produces the procedure would have to be classed as an AGP and therefore we cannot use that particular instrument at this time. You will get the same result from a hand scale and polish, it's just a bit more effort on behalf of the Hygienist!

Can you give me some antibiotics?

The rules around Dentists prescribing antibiotics are very strict and we have to be sure that you meet certain criteria in order for us to give you antibiotics. We cannot issue prescriptions for painkillers.

If you need any advice on the medications you can take, please consult your GP or go to a Chemist to get advice from a Pharmacist.

Are you taking on new NHS patients?

Unfortunately, at the moment we are unable to accept new NHS registrations. We are so busy dealing with our existing patients who are in pain and need to be seen urgently that we just don't have the capacity to register new patients. However, we do hope that this situation will change in the new year so we are taking details of anyone who wants to register with us and we will get in touch with you as soon as we can.

Why can't I use the waiting room or toilet?

We are complying with the Governments social distancing guidelines. We don't have the room in our reception area to accommodate chairs for people to wait, and for patients coming and going from their appointments and then also needing to see our Receptionists. We ask people to park their car, call us from the car and wait in their car until their Dentist/Hygienist is ready to see them. This will save patients from having to wait outside the door in the cold and wet! The toilets have to be deep cleaned after every person that uses them. Unfortunately we do not have the number or availability of staff to do this and therefore the toilets will be out of use for the time being.

I have booked an appointment but now I am showing some symptoms?

Please call the surgery and our Reception team will ask you some questions and re-book your appointment if necessary. Please do not come to the practice if you have a raised temperature (over 37.8), a new continuous cough, loss of sense of smell or taste.

If you have a dental emergency that cannot wait until we are open, please call 111.