

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE DURING COVID PANDEMIC

Introduction

Due to the high standard of normal cross infection control procedures, Dental Practices were already operating in a very clean and safe environment. We are keeping up-to-date on the new guidance that is being issued by all our various regulating bodies. We do this to make sure that our infection control procedures are current and adhere to recommendations to reduce the risk of transmission.

New Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)

Due to social distancing and new cross infection control measures, we have changed the way we book appointments and use our two surgeries. For example, after a procedure that involves drilling or ultra-sonic scaling, the surgery must be left unused for a period of time.

As a result of the reduced number of patients we will now be able to see, it will be difficult to offer flexibility in booking appointments. Priority will be given to those who are in pain or who are at higher risk or shielding.

Pre-appointment communication

As part of the New Standard Operating Procedures, we need to carry out a telephone consultation with all patients before a face to face appointment can be made. A member of the dental team will need to ask you questions and notes will need to be made in your clinical records for which we will require your verbal consent. We will be asking the following:

- Medical History
- COVID screening questions
- COVID risk assessment to make you aware of any risks you may have for more serious symptoms of COVID and to gain verbal consent for you to attend
- History of any dental problems which will help to diagnose and plan your treatment

Patient protocols

It will take some time before services return to what was previously experienced as normal. As a result of the changes we have had to make, the new experience will be quite different.

For example, the amount of time spent inside the Practice by patients should be kept to a minimum, and so although we are the same friendly team, we apologise in advance for the reduction in social interaction that these changes will necessitate.

All staff will be wearing personal protective equipment (PPE) in line with current guidance so please do not be alarmed by these changes in our appearance.

The Practice may appear quite bare when you next attend because all non-essential items have had to be removed.

To lower the risk of contamination, we have been advised to ask patients to comply with updated Practice infection control and prevention policies. This includes the following points:

- Please minimise the use of the restroom facilities at the Practice; they should **only** be used if absolutely essential, so we respectfully ask that you use the toilet and brush your teeth before arriving. If you do need to use the Restroom, please let a member of staff know. Please also leave the facilities as clean as you find them and wash your hands thoroughly.
- Please do not arrive too early to the Practice because you may have to wait outside or in your car. If you have a mobile phone call us when you arrive, and the Receptionist will let you know when we are ready to see you.
- Anyone attending the Practice should wear a mask. If you do not have one, a disposable surgical face mask will be provided free of charge.
- With the exception of children and patients with Carers/Guardians, patients should come alone.
- On entry patients (and their Carers/Guardians) will be asked the current COVID screening questions. Any patients with signs or symptoms of COVID will be advised to return home immediately and to undertake a lateral flow test.
- Please do not touch door handles or any surfaces unnecessarily inside the Practice.
- Please pay attention to the floor markings and maintain a distance of at least 2 metres wherever possible inside the Practice.
- We cannot accept liability for your personal items; **please do not bring any unnecessary items** or belongings such as shopping/groceries/laptop/iPad etc.
- Patients (and their Carers/Guardians) will be directed into the Waiting room to use the hand sanitiser before being directed upstairs to the Surgery. Therefore, if you arrive wearing gloves, you will be asked to remove and dispose of them at this stage.
- When you enter the Surgery, you will be asked to remove your coat/outerwear and place it, along with all other items (**mobile phone, keys, handbag, purse/wallet**), into the large storage container(s).
- After your treatment has finished, you will be asked to take your belongings, and be given the hand sanitiser to use before putting your mask back on. On leaving the Surgery, please go straight to Reception.
- To limit the time spent inside the Practice, the Receptionist may contact you by telephone/email to book your next appointment(s).
- Where possible, we would request that payment for treatment and sundries are made by credit/debit card (contactless payment available for up to £100). Please use the hand sanitiser provided before using the card machine. The pay terminals will be cleaned after every use.

- After payment has been taken (if applicable), please go to the Waiting Room to help maintain social distancing whilst the Receptionist unlocks the front door.
- Before you leave, you will be reminded to contact the Practice to report any signs or symptoms of COVID within 10 days of your appointment.

Appointment reminders

We will not be able to offer our normal appointment reminder service. Appointments may be made by telephone only and it is the patient's responsibility to make a note of all confirmed appointments in their diary/calendar/mobile phone etc.

Surgery time is always very valuable, but especially in the current climate. Please ensure that if you choose to make an appointment, that you do attend. Any missed appointments will be charged at a minimum of £40 and the fee will be dependent on the appointment length time.

Future communication

Where we have consent, we will be using email and/or mobile phones to communicate with patients, so please ensure you check these regularly. It is important that we are able to contact you, so if your details have changed, please can you either text/call us on 07938556195, or email us at info@lancingdentalpractice.co.uk to update your records.

We thank you for your co-operation.