



May 2020

Patient information regarding Dental Treatment During the COVID-19 / Corona Virus Pandemic

Surgery House has continued to provide emergency advice and urgent treatment for those that have required it during the COVID-19 pandemic. Dental Practices were advised at the end of March 2020 to cease all routine dental attendance and we are now in a position to recommence face-to-face dentistry in a staged way.

This information sheet is intended to provide some additional information and reassurance for you as we return to normal clinical practice as a result of the Coronavirus pandemic. You will notice that some aspects of our practice are now slightly different to what you may normally expect and I hope this information sheet helps to explain why we have taken the steps in order to protect you, and our staff, when attending for dental treatment.

How is my attendance at Surgery House different now?

In order to comply with the UK Governments continued advice on social distancing we are limiting the number of patients that come into the surgery at any one time. This may mean that we will ask you to remain in your car in the car park before the scheduled appointment in order to prevent patients having to wait for a protracted period of time within the waiting room. We are also asking patients to attend alone wherever possible to minimise the number of people in the practice environment. We will need ask you some specific questions about possible COVID infection before you attend the surgery just so we can ensure a safe clinical environment.

We have also changed the days that some of our staff work in order to minimise the number of people within the surgery at any one time. This may mean we do not have quite the same flexibility in terms of scheduling appointments for patients with particular dentists and we hope in the coming weeks that we can return to a normal clinical service in this respect. Thank you for bearing with us in the meantime.

You will notice that the waiting room has changed and that we have installed clear screens at the reception desk. This is not intended to be impersonal but just helps to provide a further protective barrier for our reception staff. On arrival we will also ask you to undertake a modified medical questionnaire in order to assess your potential risk of coronavirus infection and we will also undertake a temperature check in order to ensure that you are well prior to commencing dental treatment with us. We will be doing this for all of our patients and our staff and while this extra step is unusual for all of us this screening process is part of the best practice guidelines from the Department of Health, Public Health England and the current NHS guidance. In the event that any of our patients are clinically unwell, have a significantly elevated temperature, or have been in close contact with any known COVID-19 patient we will politely request that they return home to self-isolate and will not be able to enter the surgery for treatment.

What additional steps have we taken to protect staff and patients?

Our normal universal cross-infection control protocols at Surgery House remain in place in order to maximise the safety of our staff and to our patients. The dental surgery setting is already a very clean environment with high levels of cross infection control compared to most public areas. While it is not possible for us to control sources of infection outside the dental practice we have introduced the

following additional safeguards as a result of the Covid-19 / Corona Virus Pandemic outbreak hope also to reassure you regarding the safety of our clinical dental environment:

- **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)**
All of our staff have additional PPE in order to minimise and reduce the risk of cross infection. These include the highest recommended mask filters (FFP2 and FFP3 masks which filter 97-99% of all air) and enhanced face visors. We may also wear gowns or aprons during some dental procedures. We may look different because of this equipment but please be assured it is worn in order to protect patients and staff as part of the current guidelines.
- **Use of Hand Sanitiser on arrival and exit**
We will request that you utilise our hand sanitiser on arrival and departure from the practice to further optimise hand hygiene in and around Surgery House.
- **Maintenance of Social distancing in waiting area**
We are restricting the number of patients in the waiting room at this time in order to comply with the current guidance on social distancing. You will also notice that there is no reading material in the waiting area, for which we apologise, but this is also recommended as part of the current national guidance for medical and dental practices.
- **Longer appointment times**
We have increased the timings of some of our appointments for particular treatments. This has been undertaken to provide additional time for surgery cleaning and disinfection between patients as well as to also minimise the crossover time between patient appointments.
- **Air Filtration Purification System**
As a result of the current pandemic we have installed medical grade filtration units in all surgeries and the waiting room/ reception area in order to optimise air exchange and to filter the air within the clinical areas. This allows us to ensure complete air exchange with anti-bacterial and anti-viral filters in all of our surgeries between patient visits in order to further safeguard both staff and patients.
- **Use of an antiseptic mouthwash for both patients and staff before some procedures**
For some dental procedures we may ask you to undertake a mouth rinse prior to dental treatment as an additional measure. Our staff will also be undertaking the same mouthwash before some dental treatments to further reduce the potential risks to them.
- **Use of dental dam during some dental procedures**
The use of dental dam for some fillings and root fillings may be increased as this helps to reduce the aerosol that can be generated when we are working within the mouth. Many patients will already be used to having dental dam in place for some treatments but for some this may be a new procedure and will be explained to you in the surgery.

What if I have a dental problem and need advice or emergency treatment?

We will continue to provide a normal emergency service during normal surgery hours and we also continue to have an on-call service at evenings and weekends as we have always done. For patients who need urgent dental advice and who cannot attend the practice in person we will continue to provide telephone and video consultations wherever needed. Emergency appointments during working hours as well as out of hours can be accessed by calling or emailing the practice on 01252-873074 or by emailing us on:

surgeryhouse@btconnect.com

Thank you for your understanding at this time and as soon as we can safely return to our usual practices we will do so.