

Date: 01 July 2020

**REF: Practice Reopening Date and New Safety Protocol for Patients**

Dear Patient,

We would like to thank all of our Patients for their patience doing this long period of practice closure and for their understanding and cooperation whilst we implement new measures at Gentle.

It is our intention for all staff members to return to work on 29<sup>th</sup> June 2020 unless an extension to the current lockdown recommended by the government or professional bodies. The Gentle team will spend four days preparing the practice for reopening and practising updated procedures before patients return to the practice.

**The practice will reopen on 6th July 2020**

We would of course like to continue providing dental care to all of our patients in the safest possible environment. We therefore respectfully request your full cooperation with any new or modified procedures at the practice.

Our front desk team, including Adam and Michele, will be contacting patients with ongoing treatment and confirming appointments to continue with current courses of treatment. Our patients with ongoing, pain or delayed courses of treatment will be prioritised in the first three months of opening.

We hope you find this information in order. Please get in touch if you have any questions.

Best wishes

**Lucy, Adam and the Team**

**Front of House Contacts**

**Adam** Phone 07989 975 584  
Email: adam@gdconline.co.uk

**Michele** Phone: 07985 710 483  
Email: michele@gdconline.co.uk  
(Mon, Tues, Thurs, Fri 9am-4pm)

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## **NEW MEASURES AT GENTLE TO REDUCE RISK OF COVID-19 TRANSMISSION**

### **Summary**

- 1. Update for all relevant policies and procedures for your safety**
- 2. New steps before you attend each appointment**
- 3. We will be using additional PPE**
- 4. An interval of 20+ minutes between appointments to allow for cleaning**
- 5. More choice of appointments including evenings and weekends**
- 6. Virtual Appointments available where appropriate**

### ***Explainer***

- At Gentle 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 the dental practice is already a very clean environment compared to public areas.
- We have collectively evaluated the science and feel that the following measures will reduce risk to an acceptable level at the practice. Please be assured that all of our clinical staff will also be complying with these procedures to reduce the risk of cross infection in both directions.
- We would recommend that patients in high-risk and extremely high-risk groups delay non-essential dental treatment for as long as possible until the trend of the pandemic becomes clear. To find out whether you are in a higher or very high-risk group please see the link below: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/people-at-higher-risk-from-coronavirus/>
- We have removed all non-essential items in the open to make it easier to clean. You may find that the practice may appear to be quite bare when you attend.
- All clinical and common areas including door handles and surfaces will be disinfected using hypochlorous acid solution (electrically activated water) which is potentially viricidal against COVID-19 and other microorganisms and can be used safely on all work surfaces and indeed within dental water lines and for operative procedures. Gentle has been using sterilising solution for many years in its dental chairs and will increase use as a surface disinfectant in addition to our normal surface cleaning protocols between patients.
- Gentle will be providing an additional 20-minute buffer period between patients to allow additional time for decontamination procedures, allow for any treatment overruns and allow 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.
- All dental staff will be upgrading their personal protective equipment in line with current recommendations and evidence. We apologise in advance for the necessary reduction in social interaction. Whilst our garb 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 most dental treatments are aerosol-generating procedures (AGP's). It is almost impossible for us to carry out meaningful dental procedures without generation of some level of aerosol. Aerosol suspended in the air is a potential source of infection which we wish to keep to a minimum. Currently the dental literature suggests:
  - Our use of our high-volume suction reduces aerosol production by over 90%.
  - The use of dental rubber dam which is also routine in the practice further reduces bio aerosols by a further 30 to 90%
  - Our regular facemasks filter approximately 60% of remaining airborne particles.
  - FFP2 and FFP3 masks filter 94% and 99% respectively of airborne particles in both directions (patient to clinician and clinician to patient).
- We therefore feel that our normal dental procedures can be carried out with minimal risk using high-volume suction, dental dam and FFP2 masks, in high aerosol generating procedures like hygienist visits for periodontal treatment, FFP3 masks as appropriate.
- We are also looking into the procurement of viricidal air filtration systems for the surgeries and the reception area to further reduce aerosol risk.
- Despite the financial impact of the coronavirus, Gentle will not be increasing its normal fees for the foreseeable future unless absolutely necessary. However, the time taken to carry out treatment sessions may need to be extended by approximately 30 minutes which will be included into the fees for your procedure.
- There will be surcharges to cover PPE and related costs which are detailed in our Fee Guide (see website or available in reception)

### ***In Conclusion***

- At the time of writing there are 1,882 confirmed cases out of a population of 1,908,250 (0.09% confirmed cases) and 435 deaths from COVID - which is a 0.02% death rate.  
<https://coronavirus.data.gov.uk/#regions>
- This means that the vast majority of our patients are otherwise healthy without coronavirus infection and we would like to be able to provide normal 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.

## PATIENT PROTOCOL

### 3 Days Before your Appointment

1. Update and return your Medical History
2. Complete and return COVID Questionnaire
3. Complete and return any other paperwork relating to your appointment
4. Make payment arrangements if necessary

#### **Explainer:**

- We will request that all patients who are returning for treatment update their Medical history and COVID questionnaire and email it to the practice [info@qdconline.co.uk](mailto:info@qdconline.co.uk).
- We will routinely call you the day before your appointment to confirm your COVID status. If we feel that you are a medium to high risk of having possibly been infected, even if you are asymptomatic, we will respectfully request you to delay booking any appointments with us for at least one month.
- In view of the potential seriousness of this disease, please note that we respectfully insist that this Medical and COVID questionnaire are completed at least three days before your appointment. If we do not receive the completed questionnaire in time and we are unable to contact you for assessment of your current condition, we will cancel your appointment and inform you by email. 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 will not be offering in-house treatment to patients who have COVID-19 symptoms. If you have symptoms, please report them and we will support you.
- When travelling to the practice, we would recommend that you limit your close contact with other members of the public as far as possible. If you are able to drive or be driven and picked up by somebody with whom you live, this would be ideal. Alternatively, we would recommend coming to the practice in a taxi.
- Please carry hand sanitiser with you at all times, use regularly and avoid touching your face. Please wash your hands thoroughly for at least 30 seconds at every opportunity.
- We would kindly request that payment is made online by BACS or contactless for your appointment. This reduces the contact at reception.

## On arrival at the practice

1. If you are travelling by car, stay in the car and we will call or text you to come into the building.
2. If you are not travelling by car, please use the following waiting areas:  
  

Lucy:	BLUE sofa on the ground floor
Trevor, Naweed or George:	GREY sofa on the first floor
John- Joe or Laura:	ORANGE sofa on the ground floor
Ruth or Maria:	YELLOW sofa on the first floor mezzanine
3. Put your coat and belongings in one of the white or blue boxes in the foyer.
4. Wash your hands immediately.

## Front of House Contacts

<b>Adam</b>	Phone	07989 975 584
	Email:	adam@gdconline.co.uk
<b>Michele</b>	Phone:	07985 710 483
	Email:	michele@gdconline.co.uk
		(Mon, Tues, Thurs, Fri 9am-4pm)

## ***Explainer:***

*When you attend the practice, we will welcome you, ask for you to store your coat in one of the storage boxes in the foyer.*

*We may take your temperature digitally. If your temperature is above 37.8°C, you would not be permitted to enter the practice and will be asked to return home and self-isolate as per current government guidelines.*

*If you are well, we would direct you straight to the surgery and request that you do the following before commencing your appointment:*

- *Thoroughly wash your hands for 30 seconds with the antiseptic hand wash provided.*
- *Carry out a dilute (0.5%) aqueous povidone-iodine nasal spray and 30 second mouthwash and gargle. We will provide this in disposable bottles for you to be able to take with you or discard. This has been shown to rapidly kill the virus and reduce any viral load even if you are asymptotically infected. Our clinical staff will be carrying out the same process at each session. If you have any concerns regarding the use of iodine, please see the following link:*  
<https://multimedia.3m.com/mws/media/7162840/3m-skin-and-nasal-antiseptic-facts-about-iodine-and-iodophors.pdf>

- *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.*
- *When using the bathroom, please do your best to ensure that you leave the facilities as you would expect to find them. The restrooms will be regularly disinfected between patients and we would respectfully ask that make our team's task easier by being considerate. Please wipe down the door handles as you leave and place wipe in bin outside bathroom then hand sanitise.*
- *The additional PPE we will be wearing for many procedures is very warm and we will often be using air con or have the surgery windows open. This could make you cold though during your treatment so please bring an extra layer if your appointment is longer than 30 mins.*

### **After your appointment**

- 1. We will email you paperwork where possible.**
- 2. If you have a Chaperone, we will contact them to come into the premises.**
- 3. We will request contactless payment methods if appropriate.**
- 4. Please sanitize your hands before leaving.**
- 5. Let us know if you need anything further.**