

DENTAL PRACTICE

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REOPENING POLICY

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POST COVID-19 REOPENING POLICY

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This policy has been created based on multiple updated sources from within the dental and medical professions and the government.

It outlines modifications to our normal procedures that we intend to employ once the practice can be reopened after the COVID-19 pandemic peak has subsided.

It is not known at this time whether these procedures are temporary or whether they will become a permanent feature of the way dental practices must be run to ensure patient and staff safety in the future.

The worldwide COVID-19 pandemic is still being evaluated and studied and policies and recommendations are likely to change in line with new scientific evidence over time.

We would like to thank all of our patients for their patience and forbearance during the period of temporary practice closure and for

their understanding and cooperation whilst we implement new measures at the practice.

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



PROVISIONAL TIMETABLE



The practice will re-open for patients on Monday 29th June 2020.

We will be prioritising on an urgency of care basis, for example:

Patients who are in pain or any other urgent dental need

Patients who have lost a filling or a crown.

Patients who have any outstanding treatment not completed at the beginning of lockdown which included examinations

Our plan patients will be given priority.

We thank you all for your patience and we ask for your patience with us as we safely organise our diaries, safely welcome patients and our team back into the practice and in the return to the 'new normal'.

Patient communication before reopening

We will be contacting patients and confirming appointments ahead of their scheduled time.

We will request that all patients who are attending Ballyclare Dental update their medical and dental history forms beforehand. These forms will now be in electronic format and we will no longer be using paper forms.

The assessment forms include a new section which will allow us to assess your level of risk for coronavirus infection before you attend the surgery.

NEW MEASURES TO REDUCE THE RISK

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Our normal cross-infection control protocols at Ballyclare Dental against all previously known pathogens are already woven into all clinical activity carried out at the practice.

It should be remembered that a dental practice is 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 have collectively evaluated all of the updated guidance and observed what measures have been put in place in other countries. We feel 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 in both directions.

BEFORE ATTENDING THE PRACTICE

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We will carry out a pre-attendance assessment via your completed Medical History/Assessment forms at least three days before your appointment and, if necessary, a follow-up telephone conversation to assess relative coronavirus infection risk. Our staff will contact you to remind you of this if we have not received your completed forms. If you have any difficulties with completing the forms we can help you with this over the phone. A dentist may also carry out a video consultation with you to assess your dental problem prior to your visit so that a treatment plan and cost estimate can be sent to you.

If we feel that you are at risk of having possibly been infected, even if you are asymptomatic, we will respectfully request for you to delay booking any appointments with us for at least one month. If we do not receive the completed questionnaire in time and we are unable to contact you, we may need to cancel your appointment.

We recommend that patients in the high-risk groups for developing complications from coronavirus delay non-essential dental treatment for as long as possible until the trend of the pandemic becomes clear. If you are

in a high risk group and do require treatment we will schedule your appointment at the beginning of the day. To find out whether you are in a high or very high-risk group please see the [link here](#).

Ballyclare Dental will be operating contactless payment systems going forwards, and we will request that payment is made online or over the phone for your appointment prior to you attending if you do not have a means of making contactless payment at the time of your visit. This reduces the requirement for unnecessary contact or use of pin entries on card terminals at reception.

When travelling to the practice, we would recommend that you limit close contact with other members of the public as far as possible. We will ask patients to arrive at the practice at a designated time where you will be met at our locked front door and brought straight to the clinical room. One adult is able to attend with a child; please do not bring additional family members with you unless they are happy to wait in the car or outside the building.

ARRIVING AT THE PRACTICE

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When you attend the practice, we will welcome you, and ask for you to hang your coat or jacket in the entrance to the practice. The front door will remain locked, however we cannot accept liability for personal items so please limit what you bring into the building.

We will take your temperature with a no-touch thermometer. If your temperature is above 37.8°C, you will be unable to enter the practice and will be asked

to return home and self-isolate as per current government guidelines.

We intend to eliminate waiting inside the practice and at reception. Accordingly, appointments will be staggered so that patients do not arrive or leave at the same time as other patients as far as we are able to manage.

Restrooms are unavailable at this time.

If you are well, we will direct you straight to the surgery and request that you do the following before or during your appointment:

Use the hand sanitiser in the reception area or

Thoroughly wash your hands for 30 seconds with the antiseptic hand wash provided in the surgery

Rubber dam or other barrier mechanisms will be used for more procedures than previously.

PRACTICE PROCEDURES

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The Ballyclare Dental team have spent time critically looking at every aspect of the practice with a view to removing all non-essential items that can potentially be the cause of infection.

You will find that the practice may appear to be quite bare when you attend.

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.

All clinical and common areas including door handles and surfaces

will be regularly disinfected in addition to our normal surface cleaning protocols between patients.

Ballyclare Dental will be providing a buffer period between patients to allow additional time for additional 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.

DENTAL PROCEDURES

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All dental staff will be using personal protective equipment in line with current recommendations and evidence.

We apologise in advance for the necessary reduction in social interaction that this will necessitate. Whilst our masks 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 many dental treatments are aerosol-generating procedures (AGP's). It is difficult for us to carry out some dental 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. Currently the dental literature suggests:

Our use of our normal high-volume suction reduces aerosol production by 81%

The use of dental rubber dam where possible reduces aerosols by 90%

Our regular surgical facemasks filter approximately 80% 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 by the use of high-volume suction, rubber dam, surgical and FFP2 masks and, in aerosol generating procedures FFP3 masks as appropriate.

SUMMARY

The vast majority of our patients are otherwise healthy without coronavirus infection and we are confident that we are able to provide 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.

If you have any questions regarding this policy or about your dental care at Ballyclare Dental please do not hesitate to contact us on **info@ballyclaredental.com**.

Kind regards, The Ballyclare Dental Team

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