



Woodlands Dental Post-COVID-19 Re-opening Policy

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.

WD has been operating as an Urgent Dental Care Centre throughout the COVID-19 pandemic and has used that experience to help produce this back

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

It is our intention for the practice to re-open for routine dental care on Monday 8th June 2020. The WD team will prepare the practice for reopening and practising our updated procedures before patients return to the practice.

We will be prioritising:

- Patients that have received urgent dental care during the lockdown that still needs completing;
- Patients with treatment that was incomplete before the practice was temporarily closed;
- Patients with emergency problems or other dental problems that require urgent assessment and treatment;
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- Patients who were due for routine examinations during the period of closure.



- **Patient communication before reopening**

The WD reception team will be contacting patients and confirming appointments ahead of their scheduled time.

We will request that all patients who are attending WD update their standard Medical and Dental Questionnaire (MDQ) beforehand, ideally by email (Postal option)

This form will include a new, more detailed, section which will allow us to assess your level of risk for coronavirus infection before you attend the surgery.

New measures at WD to reduce risk of COVID-19 transmission

Our normal cross-infection control protocols at WD 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 following measures will reduce risk to the minimum 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.

Before attending the practice

- We will carry out a pre-attendance assessment via your completed Medical History/ Assessment (MDQ) 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. 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.
- ***In view of the potential seriousness of this disease, please note that we respectfully insist that the Medical and Dental Questionnaire (MDQ) is ideally 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, we may need to cancel your appointment.

- We would recommend that patients in the high-risk groups (Shielded & Vulnerable) for developing complications from coronavirus 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 high or very high-risk group please see the link below:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/people-at-higher-risk-from-coronavirus/>

- If you are in a high risk group and do require treatment we will schedule your appointment at the beginning of the day to limit your potential exposure to other patients and aerosols.
- WD will ideally be operating contactless payment systems (Apple Pay, Google Pay, Garmin Pay) going forwards. This reduces the requirement for unnecessary contact or use of pin entries on card terminals at reception. If a PIN number is required the key pad will have been thoroughly cleaned before and after its use.
- We will ask you to make sure you have used the toilet facilities at your own home prior to your appointment as the facilities are temporarily out of use to minimise chances of cross infection.
- When travelling to the practice, we would recommend that you limit close contact with other members of the public as far as possible. 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.
- Please avoid bringing coats and bags with you to the practice. If you do have personal belongings we will ask you to store these in a disinfected box that will be kept outside the clinical area.

Arriving at the practice

- When you attend the practice, we will welcome you. We will take your temperature with a digital 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.
- If you do have a coat and/or bag they will be placed into a storage box for safe keeping.



- If you are well, we would direct you straight to the surgery and request that you do the following before or during your appointment:
 - Thoroughly wash your hands for 60 seconds with the antiseptic soap and water in the toilet facility.
 - At the same time we will ask you to rinse with a hypochlorous mouth rinse- sorry it is bitter, but reduces any potential viral load.

Practice procedures

The WD 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.

- All clinical and common areas including door handles and surfaces will be regularly disinfected in addition to our normal surface cleaning protocols between patients.
- WD 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.
- We will try to see you promptly so any time in the waiting room is minimal; all the chairs have been positioned with 2m separation.

Dental procedures

- 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 over 90%. Our suction systems have been checked and all are deliver a suction rate of over 250 litres/minute (Certified by McKillop Denntal)
 - The use of dental rubber dam where possible 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 will also wear clear visors.
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- We therefore feel that our normal dental procedures can be carried out with minimal risk by the use of high-volume suction, rubber dam and FFP2 masks and, in high aerosol generating procedures FFP3 masks as appropriate.
 - Despite the financial impact of the coronavirus, WD will not be increasing its normal fees in the immediate future unless absolutely necessary. However, should the Government require extended periods between patients (Fallow period) the time taken to carry out treatment sessions may need to be extended which will be included into the fees for your procedure.

Summary

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

If you have any questions regarding this policy or about your dental care at Woodlands Dental please do not hesitate to contact us on woodlands.dental@nhs.net

Yours sincerely

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