

PATIENT JOURNEY

As we now head towards the final stages of Lockdown reopening, we wanted to ensure that you have all the information on what to expect going forward. We have been consulting widely with the appropriate authorities to ensure we comply fully with all relevant safety regulations – and we have gone further still, investing in the latest technology, and reviewing all of our working practices, to help ensure patients and staff remain safe at all times.

Thank you for your Patience

From the bottom of our hearts, we thank you all for your patience and understanding. Whilst we've been away, we have received so many lovely messages from you and these have meant a lot to us during this very difficult time. Likewise, we hope that you and your love ones have been coping in isolation and staying safe.

From 19th July 2021

We are pleased to say that we have now caught up with the majority of the backlog caused by last years Lockdown and are now able to offer a full range of routine and cosmetic dental treatments.

Changes to our working practices

This policy document describes the things you will see and details what you'll need to know when you come into the practice. The new procedures contained within have been prepared following detailed risk assessments, which draw on multiple sources within the dental and medical professions, whilst following current government guidance.

Our patient journey post lockdown policy outlines modifications to our normal working practices that we intend to implement so that we can continue to keep our staff and patients safe moving forward.

It is not yet known whether these changes will exist for a temporary period or whether they will become permanent features of the way our dental practice will need to operate in order to ensure long-term patient and staff safety.

Given the ongoing nature of the research into Covid-19, this policy will likely change in line with new guidance, which will be monitored closely by our Principle Dentists and our management team.

Travelling to your appointment

- Wherever possible, patients are requested to attend their dental appointments alone. You may attend with a carer, child, or parent/guardian if necessary.
- All patient documentation will be sent via email or SMS for patients to complete prior to the appointment.
- Patients are asked to attend with minimal personal belongings and will have to place these items into a storage box once inside the surgery (shopping bags are not allowed).
- Patients are requested not to arrive early for their appointments, you will be able to sit in the waiting room prior to your appointment.

Valley Dental Practice

Entering the building

- When you enter the building, please use the alcohol gel provided to sanitise your hands
- Please ensure that you wear a mask at all times when inside the building unless instructed to remove it by the dentist or hygienist.
- Our nurse will check your temperature and we will re-confirm some screening questions.
- If for any reason you fail the temperature test or do not pass the screening criteria, you will be asked to leave the practice and reschedule your appointment.

Around the practice

- Ideally, we ask that payment is made either via a chip and pin or contactless card transaction, but alternative arrangements can be made if required.
- The use of patient toilets will be restricted and wherever possible we ask that you go before arriving at the practice but, if you require use of the facilities, please ask reception as we need to monitor use to ensure the necessary disinfection protocols are followed after use.
- Our water fountain will be out of use. Please bring bottled water with you if you require a drink.
- We ask you to bear with our staff members during this time – we are working hard to keep you safe and these policies are new to us all. Verbal abuse will not be tolerated.
- You may find that colleagues are less able than usual to spend time chatting with patients. Please do not be offended, this is purely to keep everybody safe.

Entering the clinical setting

- Once you have entered the surgery you will be greeted by your dentist and nurse who will be wearing full PPE (personal protective equipment).
- Once seated in the chair, your dental consultation/treatment will commence as usual

Leaving the clinical setting

- Once you have completed your appointment, you can return to reception to book future appointments, and make payment if necessary
- Once each patient has left the practice setting, a strict cleaning protocol will be followed.

Environmental cleaning procedures

At Valley Dental Practice, we have spent time scrutinising every aspect of the practice with a view to removing all non-essential items that could potentially be the cause of infection.

As such, all books and patient information (unless laminated) have been removed from the practice, although these will remain readily available at the patient's request.

All clinical and communal areas including door handles and surfaces will be cleaned regularly and disinfected in addition to our normal cleaning protocols between patients.

Valley Dental Practice

Dental Procedures

Our dental team will be using PPE in line with current guidelines.

We are especially mindful that many dental interventions are aerosol generating procedures (AGP's) and it is difficult for us to carry out some dental treatments without the generation of some 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:

- The use of high-volume suction reduces aerosol production by over 90%
- Our regular surgical facemasks filter approximately 60% of remaining airborne particles
- FFP2 and FFP3 masks filter 94% and 99% respectively of airborne particles in both directions.

We therefore feel that our normal dental procedures can be carried out at minimal risk using high-volume suction, surgical and FFP2/FFP3 masks.

Along with the above, the Valley Dental Practice has taken additional precautions:

- The practice has air filtration systems in the surgeries and in the waiting room
- We have introduced the use of Optizil surface spray with its active ingredient of Hypochlorous acid (HOCl), which is part of a group of small molecules known as reactive oxygen species (ROS). This is the same chemical produced by the human immune defence system to kill viruses and fight infection.

SUMMARY

The vast majority of our patients are healthy, without coronavirus infection, and we are confident of our ability to provide dental care to these patients in as normal environment as possible whilst bearing in mind our responsibilities to mitigate the risks of spreading infection as far as is practically possible.

We do hope you'll be reassured by the information above and feel safe when attending the practice. Please do not be alarmed when you see us in our protective clothing – our staff are still the same lovely, smiley team, but they are now working under somewhat different circumstances.

We cannot wait to see you all again. Until then, keep safe and well.