

Victoria Road Dental Clinic

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 clinic reopens 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 clinics must be run to ensure patient and staff safety in the future. The worldwide COVID-19 pandemic is still being evaluated and studied. Policies and recommendations are likely to change in line with new scientific evidence over time.

We would like to thank you for your patience and understanding during the period of temporary clinic closure and whilst we have implemented new measures at the clinic.

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 clinic.

Timetable

The clinic will re-open on Monday 15th June 2020 for scheduled face to face appointments and remote consultations can be arranged if more suitable.

We will initially be prioritising appointments for those patients with emergency problems or other dental problems that require urgent assessment.

This will then be extended to other patient groups prioritising appointments for:

- Patients with treatment that was not able to be completed before the clinic was temporarily closed;
- Patients who were due for routine examinations and hygienist visits during the period of closure;
- Patients who are due orthodontic reviews.

Patient communication before your appointment

Our Team will be contacting you and confirming appointments ahead of your scheduled time.

We will request that you update your Medical History and Assessment forms beforehand. These forms will be in electronic format and include a new section which will allow us to assess your level of risk for coronavirus infection before you attend the surgery.

We will carry out a pre-attendance assessment via telephone prior to your appointment to discuss your Medical History and other Assessment forms and, to assess your current coronavirus infection risk.

Our Reception team 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 2 weeks.

If we do not receive the completed forms in time and we are unable to contact you, we may need to cancel your appointment. 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 would recommend that if you are clinically extremely vulnerable and are in the high-risk groups for developing complications from coronavirus you should 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 require treatment please contact us and we will discuss this with you.

Going forwards we will be operating contactless payment systems, and we would request that payment is made prior to your appointment by means of either online (BACS transfer) or via the phone prior to you attending. If you do not have a means of making the payment prior to your appointment we request that you make payment by Apple Pay, Google Pay or Android pay using contactless via your phone at the time.

This allows us to adopt a 'one way flow' system for patients through the clinic and reduces the requirement for unnecessary contact or use of pin entries on card terminals at reception.

Arriving at the clinic

Please attend with a face covering/mask and your own pen if possible. Please wear this face covering/mask at all times when in the clinic until advised otherwise.

We are aiming to eliminate unnecessary waiting at the clinic.

Appointments will be managed so that we are able to limit patients in the clinic at any one time.

Please attend alone for your appointment unless absolutely necessary. Please let us know beforehand if you will be attending with a chaperone. One adult from the same household is able to attend with a child.

On arrival 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 clinic and will be asked to return home and self-isolate as per current government guidelines.

We will ask for you to place your coat/ bag/personal belongings in a lidded box at

reception. The front door will remain locked, however we cannot accept liability for personal items so please limit what you bring into the clinic.

We will direct you 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
- Use a virucidal pre-rinse prior to any treatment
- Avoid use of the spittoon

We would ask you to avoid using our toilet, but if you do need to please do your best to ensure that you leave the facilities as you would expect to find them and wash your hands thoroughly. The toilet will be regularly disinfected between patients.

Clinic procedures

We have spent time critically looking at every aspect of the clinic with a view to removing all non-essential items that can potentially be the cause of infection. You will find that the clinic may appear to feel quite different 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.

The clinic 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

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 may 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:

- The use of our normal high-volume suction reduces aerosol production by over 90%.
- 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 therefore feel that our normal dental procedures can be carried out with minimal risk by the use of high-volume suction, rubber dam and surgical, FFP2 and FFP3 masks as appropriate.

Despite the financial impact of the coronavirus, the clinic will not be increasing its normal fees for the foreseeable future unless absolutely necessary. A PPE fee may apply depending on treatment required and the time taken to carry out treatment sessions may need to be extended, which will be included into the fees for your procedure.

New measures to reduce risk of COVID-19 transmission

Our meticulous cross-infection control protocols against all previously known pathogens are already adhered to with all activity carried out at the clinic.

We know that a dental clinic is already a very clean environment compared to public areas and there is no evidence of COVID-19 transmission occurring in increased rates in clinicians and dental team.

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 clinic.

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.

Summary

You will be attending in the knowledge that you are free from coronavirus infection.

We are confident that we are able to provide your dental care in a risk-free environment as much 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 necessary by circumstances.

If you have any questions regarding this policy or about your dental care at Victoria Road Dental Clinic please do not hesitate to contact us on info@thevrdc.com or by calling 01895636121.

We look forward to continuing to help you look after your dental health.