



**Coronavirus policy – Patient information**  
**Updated 30<sup>th</sup> May 2020**  
**To our valued patients and friends**

We understand that the global coronavirus pandemic has affected all our patients' lives. We appreciate that many of you will be concerned about safety and will be wondering when we will be back to "normal services". We wanted to put together a document to reassure our patients that we are working tirelessly to ensure that when we are able to open our doors we will do so in a way that is safe for both patients and our team. As you will be aware, we already have stringent cross-infection control procedures in place as a standard required by all dental practices, but you will probably not be surprised to hear that we are looking at ways to improve our already stringent cross-infection control policies and procedures to ensure we keep you, our valued patients safe.

On the 25th March 2020, all dental practices in England were instructed by the English Chief Dental officer to stop all face to face patient contact and to provide telephone advice and prescriptions where necessary. The rationale for this guidance was to reduce the possibility of transmission of the coronavirus during this phase of the pandemic and was designed to be in line with the governments overall strategy for managing the COVID-19 pandemic.

The pandemic continues to be challenging for everyone. Our team has continued to work hard every day to support our patients to the best of our abilities under the new restrictions. We thank you for your patience and understanding during these unprecedented times. We have already been able to help hundreds of our patients with remote telephone and video consultations so we encourage you to contact us if you have any queries. Our telephone lines, emails and social media channels are being manned during our usual surgery opening hours so that we can help those that need us. We have been developing priority lists for those patients that will require face to face consultations as soon as we reopen.

We are now preparing for reopening of our practice to begin face to face services again as soon as nationally recognised guidance deems it safe for patients and staff. We are still awaiting full guidance and aim to keep our patients informed as soon as we know the full picture. If you don't already follow our social media channels we would encourage you to do so to keep up to date with the latest developments as they happen. The guidance is changing on a daily basis as new data from Public Health England and abroad creates better understanding of the situation.

Although the situation is constantly changing, we know that we will need to introduce some changes in order to protect patients and staff as nationally agreed guidelines are developed. Therefore we would be grateful if you could take some time to read through the documentation as to what to expect and what implementations we will have in place.



### **When will we re-open?**

We will re-open as soon as we can satisfy FGDP (Faculty of General Dental Practice) guidelines that it is safe for our patients and our team. We have as a practice over the weeks during lockdown have done our very best to get ready for opening and to ensure that our practice is ready with measures in place to create a safe and comfortable environment for our patients.

The health and safety of our patients and staff is always our absolute priority. Again, we would encourage you to follow our social media streams for the most up to date information.

### **Who will be seen and what treatments can be carried out**

We have developed a list of patients who have contacted us during lockdown and will prioritise on a needs based approach starting with those that we are aware have already been having problems.

Due to the stringent increased PPE required amidst worldwide shortages in supply and social distancing measures we will be unable to operate at our normal capacity for the foreseeable future so please bear with us as we will be working hard to do our very best under extremely challenging situations. Safety will always take priority.

In line with international colleagues in other countries who are already back at work, we appreciate that a phased approach will be best in order to minimise risks as much as possible. This is essential as we begin to come out of lock down. We will be carrying out stringent screening measures prior to appointments being offered. The criteria will be based upon your COVID 19 risk level and also your vulnerability level.

We will be operating a pre-booked appointment-only service. Please see below for details on how to pre-book an appointment.

- All patients will be screened thoroughly and only patients who are low risk will be offered an appointment.
- On arrival you will be screened again and your temperature checked before entry. If you have a high temperature you will be refused entry to the practice.
- If we identify any risks factors during this stringent screening process even if you are asymptomatic you will be given advice on further isolation or if your enquiry is urgent we will make any necessary referrals to the appropriate urgent care centre on your behalf.
- Patients who are more vulnerable due to medical conditions or belong to the shielded group such as over 70's we ask that you continue to follow government social distancing and shielding guidance if your enquiry is non urgent.
- If your enquiry is urgent then we will make special arrangements for you to attend first in the day and your appointment time will be extended to allow enough time so you do not come into contact with other patients coming into the practice or we may refer you to an appropriate urgent care centre.

We would anticipate that the first treatment allowed would be basic treatments which do not involve aerosols therefore initial treatment being offered will be more limited during this initial



period. As a practice we have agreed to look after the patients of greatest needs first. Patients who contacted with emergency dental problems during the lockdown will be prioritised first and as we begin to return to normal working schedule there will be some restrictions in place.

### **What steps are we taking to prepare the practice?**

We at Burnett Dental take pride in the high standards we maintain in our cross infection control and we continually review and improve our standards. This was validated by passing our CQC inspection in July 2017 (details of our inspection can be found on the Care Quality Commission's website)

There has been growing evidence that during this pandemic the number of reported coronavirus infections in dental practices has been extremely low, the suggestion is that this is most likely attributed to the very stringent cross-infection measures that are already implemented across dental practices and the tight regulations in place.

Despite this, we are taking steps to enhance this even further in many cases, going beyond what is recommended. We have sought advice from experts and we are reviewing all our cross infection protocols to see where we can improve even further to ensure that we implement tight controls across the board and we are taking extra measures to ensure the safety of patients and staff.

Therefore you may notice some notable changes when you arrive again at our practice:-

1. All our staff will be screened on a daily basis for symptoms and temperature checked. If a staff member is identified with COVID-19 symptoms they will be asked to immediately return home and to self-isolate. They will also be referred for testing where appropriate.
2. For your safety, we will be screening all patients before arriving at the practice. This will allow our staff to assist you to complete a confidential medical history including a coronavirus screening questionnaire to ensure you are safe to make an appointment.
3. On arrival you will see a notice on our door to explain that entry is restricted to patients who have made an appointment. Patients wishing to book an appointment must contact the practice first before arriving. If you arrive without an appointment and without prior risk assessment you will be denied entry. This is for the protection of all our patients and staff.
4. We have a clear Perspex cough and sneeze shields installed at reception for the protection of patients and staff. Our receptionists will also be wearing masks on your arrival
5. All our patients will be advised to come alone. Where there is a necessity for an accompanying person, you will notice our seating arrangements will be placed 2m apart to maintain adequate social distancing.
6. All non-essential items within the waiting areas such as magazines, toys, leaflets will be removed to reduce risks of contact transmission via these items.
7. Personal hygiene and cross infection measure will be in place such as alcohol gel stations. Tissues and bins will be made available for patients to use and asks that all patients catch all sneezes and coughs in provided tissues and bin and to use alcohol gel afterwards.
8. Regular decontamination of clinical and common areas included touch points such as handles, switches, chairs, tables and other surfaces with disinfectants which are highly effective against bacteria and viruses such as the coronavirus



9. We already treat our water lines routinely. This will continue to do so to eliminate potential bacteria and viruses.
10. We continue to put all our instruments go through a multi-stage decontamination and sterilisation protocol. Our autoclaves sterilise at 134°C (15psi) autoclave which kills all bacteria and also viruses such as coronavirus
11. We will be enhancing our staff personal protective equipment (PPE) and as such we apologise in advance for reduction of visibility of our usual friendly smiley faces!
12. To continue to adhere to social distancing measure we will be staggering appointments to eliminate waiting times in reception as much as possible so reduce possibility of patients arriving or leaving at the same time.
13. Use of the patient toilet will be discouraged but we understand it may be needed occasionally. It will be cleaned and disinfected regularly.

### **How to make an appointment and what to expect on arrival at the practice**

Once we have received confirmation on reopening this will be the protocol for arranging an appointment and arrival:

- 1. Please help us assist you in making your dental appointment as comfortable as possible for you by updating your mandatory medical history and COVID-19 screening tool.**  
Completing the mandatory medical and COVID-19 questionnaire can be done via email and through our secure patient portal. We are requesting that this is completed before you arrive at the practice for your safety so that you do not have to handle paper/ pens and to reduce your time in the practice. The link to the patient portal can be found on our website or the link below.  
<https://secure.dentr.co.uk/burnett-dental-group>
- 2. Please contact our practice by telephone or email to arrange an appointment. Anyone arriving at the practice without an appointment will be sadly turned away. During this time, we will not be able to welcome walk-in visitors or patients.**
3. All patients will be screened first with a questionnaire to assess for any potential COVID-19 symptoms but also your vulnerability risk level. If we establish that you are at a medium of high risk of being infected although without symptoms we will respectfully request to re-schedule and defer any appointments for 1 month.
4. We will request payment via contactless card payment or through our patient portal where possible. The reason for this is to reduce the handling of cash/ cheques and avoid the unnecessary use of card terminals at reception.
5. When preparing to come to the surgery we ask that you arrive at the clinic unaccompanied. Reducing the number of people in the practice improves social distancing and reduces the risk of viral transmission. If this is not possible please contact reception before attending to discuss.
6. Please maintain social distancing measures when travelling to the practice and limit your contact with other members of the public as much as possible. As per new government



guidance, we would advise that you wear a facial covering. Advice on this can be found here: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-51205344>

7. On arrival near to the practice, if possible, please telephone the practice to inform of arrival and wait nearby or at the carpark. You will then receive a further call or text once the practice is ready for you to enter. This is to ensure we reduce number of people inside the practice at any one time to minimise risks of contact transmission.
8. On arrival we ask all patients to use the alcohol hand gels at our newly installed hand sanitation station. Please remain behind the social distancing markers and you will be asked by one of our team to confirm your details.
9. Your temperature will be then be checked. If we detect a temperature above 37.8 °C, you will be refused further entry and given advice on self-isolating. We will then contact you to rearrange your appointment once you are asymptomatic and all clear or; if your enquiry is urgent then we will make an immediate referral to an appropriate urgent care centre equipped to assist patients suspected or confirmed COVID-19 symptoms
10. Every effort will be made to get you straight into surgery on arrival but if it is unavoidable to keep you waiting, we would encourage patients to remain seated and to refrain from moving about the practice.
11. Toilet facilities are known to be a potential source of infection so we would discourage you from using public facilities including our own. However, if you require the use of our toilet facilities, please inform reception and we will inform you as to when it is ready for use. If you use the facilities, please wash your hands thoroughly immediately afterwards.

### **Entering into surgery and your treatment**

1. Once the clinical staff is ready you will be invited into the surgery
2. On entering we will ask you to wash your hands to use alcohol gel once again to disinfect your hands
3. We will review your records again and screening questionnaires to ensure there have been no changes
4. We will provide you with a disinfecting mouth wash to rinse for 30 seconds before any procedure
5. Depending on the procedure being carried out clinical staff maybe wearing further additional personal protective equipment which may include a FFP2/3 respirator, visor, surgical gown
6. There continues to be an ongoing debate on Aerosol Generating Procedures and as such if a high speed drill or ultrasonic is used for your procedure there are extra precautions that we are looking to reduce aerosol production:
  - High volume suction will be used which reduces aerosol production by over 90%
  - Rubber dam in routine dental work which reduces aerosols by a further 30-90%
  - FFP2/3 masks filter 94-99% of airborne particles
  - A clinical air filtration system running at all times when you are in surgery
7. If any documents require signatures we recommend that this be done prior to your visit on the patient portal – <https://secure.dentr.co.uk/burnett-dental-group> . Alternatively we will



provide you with a disposable glove to sign on our iPad which will be disinfected after every patient use. We will then send you a digital copy via email.

8. If further appointments are required you will be contacted by our reception team to arrange this. If you have any questions about our policy please do not hesitate to contact us and we will be happy to clarify any points.

We do hope that you and your loved ones are safe and well.

Kindest regards,

Team at Burnett Dental Group