

North House Dental and Skincare Clinic: POST COVID-19 REOPENING POLICY



INTRODUCTION

North House Dental Practice & Skincare Clinic will officially be opening its doors very soon and we can't wait to see you all! Although this is great news, your safety and wellbeing is of utmost priority so we will not be rushing to reopen until we are satisfied that it is safe to do so. Please take a few minutes to read over this very important policy.

This policy has been created based on a review of documentation from the government as well as official bodies, institutes and organisations in our profession.

'Contactless Dentistry' does not exist as of yet...maybe in the future it might be carried out by robots..and social distancing is impossible in the surgery where we are working inside the mouth. This is why we have implemented additional safety measures to mitigate the risks of infection transmission that this might present as well as adhere to social distancing where possible in the rest of the building. This new re opening policy outlines modifications to our normal procedures that we intend to implement once the practice can be reopened to ensure continued safety for our team and patients.

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 you all for your patience during the period of temporary practice closure and for your 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 in the week beginning Monday 15th June 2020.

Particularly in the early stages, there will be limits on what can be done clinically and how many patients can be seen in a day, with variation in the extent and speed of progress possible.

The Team at North House have been busy planning for our reopening and we have been practising our updated procedures before patients return to the practice. We will initially be prioritising:

- Patients with emergency problems or those that require urgent treatment.

When the lockdown restrictions are further lifted and the risk is reduced we will be able to see:

- Patients with treatment that was not completed prior to the lockdown.
- Patients who were due for routine examinations and hygiene visits during the period of closure.
- Patients who are due orthodontic reviews or skincare treatments.

Please be patient with this phased approach as we will be guided by the government and our professional bodies.

If you have already contacted North House regarding a dental emergency during the lockdown period, then we will contact you to arrange an appointment. Any other patient who has a dental emergency please get in touch by leaving us a voice message.

We request that all patients who are attending the practice update their standard medical and dental forms beforehand. These forms will now be in an electronic contactless format to avoid the handling of papers and iPads. Please complete all forms well in advance of your appointment.

NEW SAFETY MEASURES TO REDUCE THE RISK OF TRANSMISSION

Our normal cross-infection control protocols at North House have always been gold standard and this will not change. The only difference is extra safety measures to protect against specific risks associated with Covid-19.

It should be remembered that a dental practice is already a very clean environment and there is no evidence of increased COVID-19 transmission occurring in dentists or their staff. We plan to adopt universal precautions to ensure staff, patients, clinicians and other members of the public who attend the practice are kept safe.

Dental practices are highly skilled in infection control and have well-established protocols that are regularly checked and audited against government standards. We have evaluated all available guidance and measures put into place by other countries as well as current evidence, and we can therefore confidently reassure patients that the measures which will be outlined in this policy will reduce the risk to a minimum level.

Please be assured that our team is committed to maintaining up-to-date infection control procedures.

BEFORE YOUR APPOINTMENT

When you call to book an appointment, reception will ask you some screening questions for a Covid-19 risk assessment and ask some questions about the problem you may be having. A dentist may also carry out a video or phone consultation or triage with you to assess your dental problem prior to your visit so that we can plan ahead for a potential procedure. Only after this will an appointment be booked.

You will be sent contactless forms to complete before your visit. This process helps us to assess your relative Coronavirus risk before any treatment.

We will carry out a pre-attendance assessment via your completed Medical History/Assessment forms a few days before your appointment and, if necessary, a follow-up telephone conversation. 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.

[Please click here for a short video on the contactless forms](#)

Reception shall call you a day before your appointment to ask some basic screening questions to assess your level of Coronavirus risk-this is a safety precaution that has been advised for all patients as per the new guidelines.

If by the risk assessment you are deemed to show symptoms of Covid-19 then we will ask you to delay booking any appointments and self isolate until symptoms clear. Further information can be obtained from NHS 111.

If we do not receive the completed questionnaire 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 recommend that patients in high-risk groups for developing complications from coronavirus delay non-essential dental treatment for as long as possible until the alert level reduces. If you are in a high risk group and do require emergency treatment we will schedule your appointment at the beginning of the day. We can help assess if you are high or low risk through the forms you complete.

When travelling to the practice, we would recommend that you limit close contact with other members of the public as far as possible and please do not bring additional family members unless they are happy to wait in the car or outside the building. The exception to this is a parent of a child we are treating or carer. Please limit personal belongings you bring and it is advisable to use the restroom before you arrive as our restroom facilities will be for emergencies only.



ARRIVING AT THE PRACTICE

When you attend the practice, please call us when you have arrived. We will ask you to wait in your car or outside until we call you. This is because we want to limit the number of patients in the building and ensure the environment is safe before you enter. For this reason it is advisable not to arrive too early for your appointment. We will meet all patients outside the building. Once we call you, please be ready by the door, there is no need to ring the doorbell or knock. We will ask some simple screening questions to ensure your level of infection risk hasn't changed. Temperature testing is no longer required. You may be asked to return home if your level of risk has changed.

You will be given a hand sanitiser to use and a fluid resistant mask to wear at all times. This mask will only be removed when in the treatment room. We will then welcome you into the practice.

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. In the instance that there is more than one patient in the building at any one time, we have a zoning protocol implemented to ensure safe social distancing is maintained.

If you need to use the restrooms please let reception know. When using the restrooms, please do your best to ensure that you leave the facilities as you would expect to find them and wash your hands thoroughly. The restrooms will be regularly disinfected between patients .

Once you're in the building on arrival, we will direct you straight to the surgery where possible or ask you to wait in the lounge. You will find that the practice may appear to be quite bare when you attend, as we have removed all unnecessary items to allow for a more sterile environment. We regret that during this interim period, we will not be providing our normal tea and coffee services or magazines in the interests of reducing all opportunities for cross infection to a minimum.



IN THE TREATMENT ROOM

Once you are escorted to the surgery or treatment room, you will be asked to place your belongings into a sealed box which will be safely stored. You will be asked to remove your mask and place it inside a sealed plastic bag which you keep.

We will place your bib and glasses as per usual and we may ask you to use a disinfecting mouthwash before some dental treatments are provided.

Rubber dam or other barrier mechanisms will be used for more procedures than previously. Windows may be kept open and the door will remain closed.

You will notice that the dentist and nurse will have enhanced PPE such as gowns and head covers again to reduce the levels of risk and transmission.

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%.

The use of dental rubber dam where possible reduces bio aerosols by a further 30 to 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 (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, gowns, visors and surgical and FFP2 masks as appropriate. We appreciate that this is a high level of technical information but it is here for your reference if you need reassurance on how we are minimising risk.

Once your treatment is complete, your goggles and bib will be removed, and you will be asked to wear your mask and sanitise your hands before leaving the treatment room. You will then collect your belongings and be asked to wait in the patient lounge. The Dentists usually discuss your follow up or treatment plan with you afterwards as this is part of the personal service we

provide. However in the current circumstances and to minimise your time in the practice, the Dentist may decide to discuss your treatment plan with you over the phone at a later time.

LEAVING THE PRACTICE

The receptionist will then take payment and escort you out of the building, please remove the mask on leaving the building and place it into a plastic sealed bag. We will dispose of this for you. We will sanitise your hands as you leave and wave goodbye!

We 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 it minimises waiting time.

Before the next patient is seen, the team will follow a strict 'clean down' and disinfection protocol for the clinical areas as per our usual protocol but in addition the common areas including door handles, chairs and restrooms will be regularly disinfected between patients. Staff are trained in this 'clean down' procedure and have the appropriate PPE to do so.

Only once the environment is deemed to be safe, will we allow entry for the next patient.

FOLLOW UP

Reception will contact you later in the day by email or telephone to see how you are as well as book any follow up appointments. This is to minimise time spent at reception. We will endeavour to be as paperless as possible, emailing treatment plans and invoices when applicable. Any leaflets or instructions we may provide will be given to you in an envelope as you exit.

Safety of our team is just as important as for our patients so we are following strict and robust training protocols so that we are confident as a team in our measures and modified workflow patterns. All dental staff will be using personal protective equipment in line with current recommendations and evidence.

We apologise in advance for the reduction in social interaction. Whilst our masks may make us appear impersonal and distant, please be assured we are still the same friendly team underneath it all!

Due to the financial impact of the coronavirus, and in particular the need for enhanced PPE and PPE shortages, all treatments may be subject to a temporary supplementary fee which will range from £11.75-£41.50 depending wholly on the service provided. This is purely to cover just a proportion of the cost of the extra safety precautions we are taking regarding PPE and it is for the benefit of the patients, the team and the public. This is not a permanent fee. However, the time taken to carry out treatment will need to be extended but we will not be charging for this additional time.

SUMMARY

Here at North House, we are confident that we are able to provide dental care for our patients in as normal an environment as possible while bearing in mind our responsibilities to mitigate risks of infection transmission as far as is practically possible.

This policy will be constantly reviewed and updated as necessitated by circumstances over time.

Once again we would like to thank you for your time and understanding with regards to this unprecedented situation. We are putting all of our efforts into ensuring that we continue to deliver the highest level of care in the safest possible environment .

If you have any questions regarding this policy or about your care at North House Dental Practice, please do not hesitate to contact us. We will endeavour to keep you informed as and when there are changes to national alert levels and subsequent access to dental procedures.

Tel: 01992 462022

Email: info@northhousedental.com

With Kind regards and warm wishes,

Mr and Mrs Ram & the Team at North House Dental and Skincare Clinic.