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## **COVID-19 REOPENING 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.

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 continually change in line with new scientific evidence over time.

### ***Provisional Timetable:***

The practice will re-open for patients who require essential dental treatment from the 8<sup>th</sup> June 2020.

This will be extended to other treatments as the lockdown restrictions are eased further.

The Winslow Dental Practice will prepare the practice for reopening and practising our updated procedures before patients return to the practice.

### **We will initially be seeing:**

- Patients with emergency problems or other dental problems that require urgent assessment and treatment;
- Patients with treatment that was not completed prior to the lockdown;

**When the lockdown restrictions are further lifted, we will be able to see:**

- Patients who were due for routine examinations and hygienist visits during the period of closure;
- Cosmetic Dental procedures

We will be contacting patients and confirming appointments ahead of their scheduled time.

We will request that all patients who are attending the Winslow Dental Practice update their standard medical and dental history forms beforehand. These forms will now be in electronic format available on our website or we can email these to you, so as to drastically reduce the need to use paper forms.

The assessment forms include a new section which will allow us to assess your level of risk for coronavirus infection before you attend the surgery.

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### ***NEW MEASURES TO REDUCE THE RISK OF COVID-19***

#### ***TRANSMISSION***

Our normal cross-infection control protocols at our practice against all previously known pathogens are already deeply 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 measures which are outlined in this policy will reduce risk to the minimum level at the practice.

Please be assured that all of our clinical staff will also be complying with our updated procedures to reduce the risk of cross infection in both directions.

#### ***BEFORE ATTENDING AT THE PRACTICE***

We will carry out a pre-attendance assessment via your completed Medical History and screening forms at least two 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.

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 the high-risk groups for developing complications from coronavirus delay non-essential dental treatment for as long as possible until the trend of the pandemic becomes clear. If you are in a high-risk group and do require treatment, we will schedule your appointment at the beginning of the day.

As far as practically possible, the Winslow Dental Practice will be operating contactless payment systems going forwards, and we will request that payment is made by card or some form of contactless payment such as Google Pay or Android pay. This reduces the requirement for unnecessary contact.

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.

### ***ARRIVING AT THE PRACTICE***

When you attend the practice, we will welcome you, and ask ideally to leave your coat and belongings in the car or if you haven't attended in a car to hang your coat or jacket in the porch entrance to the practice. The front door will remain locked; however, we cannot accept liability for personal items so please limit what you bring into the building. 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.

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 hand thoroughly. The restrooms will be regularly disinfected between patients.

If you are well, we will direct you straight to the surgery and request that you do the following before or during your appointment:

1. Use the hand sanitiser in the reception area or
2. Thoroughly wash your hands for 30 seconds with the antiseptic handwash provided in the surgery.
3. We may ask you to use a Hydrogen Peroxide/ Iodine mouthwash before some dental treatments are provided.
4. Rubber dam or other barrier mechanisms will be used for more procedures than previously.

## ***PRACTICE PROCEDURES***

The practice 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.

The dental team 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 PROCEDURE:***

All dental staff will be using personal protective equipment in line with current recommendations and evidence.

We apologize 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 dental procedures without generation of some level of aerosol. Aerosol suspended in the air is a theoretical and unproven source of infection, which nevertheless we obviously will keep to a minimum.

### **Currently the dental literature suggests:**

Our use of our normal high-volume suction reduces aerosol production by over 98%.

The use of dental rubber dam where possible reduces bioaerosols 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 the 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, surgical and FFP2 masks.

Despite the financial impact of the coronavirus, The Winslow Dental Practice will not be increasing its normal fees unless absolutely necessary.

However, the time taken to carry out treatment sessions may need to be extended which may be included into the fees for your procedure.

All dental staff will be using personal protective equipment in line with current recommendations and guidelines.

***Summary:***

The vast majority of our patients are otherwise healthy without coronavirus infection and we are confident that we are able to provide 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 The Winslow Dental Practice please do not hesitate to contact us on 01296712548 or email us at [info@winslowdentalpractice.co.uk](mailto:info@winslowdentalpractice.co.uk)

With Kind Regards,

Dr Karlekar and team

## SUMMARY OF COVID 19 REOPENING POLICY

### **We would like to inform you of some changes in the practice that all staff and patients must adhere to**

- ❖ Our practice will communicate with you beforehand to ask some screening questions. You'll be asked those same questions again at your appointment.
- ❖ We have hand sanitizer that we will ask you to use when you enter the practice. You will also find some in the reception area and other places in the practice for you to use as needed.
- ❖ We have installed protective screens at the reception desk for patients and staff.
- ❖ We no longer offer magazines, children's toys and so forth, since those items are difficult to clean and disinfect.
- ❖ With the exception of children and patients with carers, patients should endeavor to come alone to their appointments.
- ❖ A distance of 2metres must be observed if another patient is present in the dental practice.
- ❖ Payment should be made by card where possible or any form of contactless payment such as Google Pay or Android Pay.
  - ❖ Staff will not shake your hand
- ❖ If you show symptoms following appointment booking, you should contact the practice by phone.
- ❖ Please try not to arrive early to the practice. If necessary, you should wait outside the practice. This is to maintain social distance and reduce risks
  - ❖ Patients should come wearing a mask if possible.
- ❖ Appointments are managed to allow for social distancing between patients and minimize the number of patients in the waiting room.

If you wish to make an appointment please do not attend the practice please call 01296 712548 or email us at [info@winslowdentalpractice.co.uk](mailto:info@winslowdentalpractice.co.uk)

**We appreciate your cooperation and patience during this time.**