

## **IMPORTANT**

If you have a dental problem, please give our Reception Team a call and we will arrange for one of our dentists to call you back and book you an appointment where necessary.

### **Re-scheduling of Routine Exam Appointments**

Unfortunately, we are still having to reschedule routine appointments. We understand that this is frustrating and want to explain the reason we are doing this:

We follow the guidelines set by the Chief Dental Officer for England and other regulatory bodies to ensure the safety of our patients and staff. These mean that we are still restricted in how many patients we can see per day and that patients must be prioritised by urgency.

Many of our procedures result in the production of airborne particles. These particles are a mix of water, saliva, bacteria and microorganisms that occur naturally in the mouth. They can also include viruses, a particular concern during this pandemic. We have therefore had to implement new, important infection control procedures. If we need to use a drill, for example, that surgery is then out of action for up to 30 minutes after that patient leaves to let things settle, and then for a further 20 minutes to enable us to thoroughly clean the surgery and set up for the next patient. This means each dentist now requires two surgeries and can see far fewer patients in a day than before, as a typical 30 minute appointment can now take 1 hour 20 minutes. As you can see, it really is not business as usual and it won't be whilst these important procedures remain in place.

We are a busy practice with a large NHS dental contract. This enables us to look after a significant number of local patients dental care. Having a large number of patients, means it is usual to have phone calls each day from patients with a problem, whether it's for trauma, a broken tooth, lost filling or dental pain. Usually we are able to fit these patients in alongside our normal check-up and treatment appointments. However, with the reduced surgeries and longer appointment times, the number of patients we can see is limited and as explained above we must prioritise these patients over routine check-ups.

Our guidelines also advise that we should minimise all face to face patient contact. As the R rate is currently rising and many areas of the country are going into lockdown we feel very strongly that both our patients and staff's safety is the most important consideration.

Our dentists will be risk assessing their patients to ensure that those at high risk are seen for routine examination appointments as soon as it is feasible. In the meantime, we are rescheduling all examination appointments. We apologise if we have previously moved an appointment and hope you understand why it is necessary to do so again. We would all love to get back to normal, but it just isn't possible at the moment.

In the meantime, if you have any dental problem please do give us a call, don't wait until your next check-up appointment. We have dentists available every day to speak to patients and make appointments if necessary.

Thank you for your understanding.

