

We are Covid-19 Secure

Post-Covid-19 Re-opening Policy



Keeping you safe

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 change in line with new scientific evidence over time.

We would like to thank all of our patients for their patience and forbearance during the period of temporary practice closure and for their 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

It is our intention for the practice to re-open for patients on Thursday 11th June 2020 unless the lockdown is tightened again (for instance due to a second spike) by the government or professional bodies. The Riverside Dental management team will prepare the practice for reopening and train the rest of the team for the new procedures before patients return to the practice.

We will be prioritising:

- Patients with emergency problems or other dental problems that require urgent assessment and treatment.
- Patients with treatment that was incomplete before the practice was temporarily closed.
- Patients who are due orthodontic reviews.
- Patients who were due for routine examinations and hygienist visits during the period of closure.

Patient communication before reopening

Practice Manger Gemma, Clinical Lead Jess and receptionist Lucy will be contacting patients and confirming appointments ahead of their scheduled time.

We will request that all patients who are attending Riverside Dental update their standard Medical and Dental Questionnaire beforehand. This will include a new, more detailed, triage which will allow us to assess your level of risk for coronavirus infection before you attend the surgery. This could be integrated online via our website and we will let you know as soon as this is live.

All patients will be phoned 24 hours prior to their appointment and advised of our new protocols and what is needed from you prior to your appointment. It is imperative we are able to speak with you the day before your appointment. If we are unable to speak with you, we will leave a message/send an email asking you to contact us as soon as possible.

Please note if we are unable to speak with you the day before your appointment we will be unable to see you for your appointment. We will either call you from our normal number or a withheld number but expect the call.



New measures to reduce risk of Covid-19 transmission

Our normal cross-infection control protocols at Riverside Dental against all previously known pathogens are already 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 following measures will reduce risk to the minimum level at the practice. 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.

Before attending the practice

- We will carry out a pre-attendance assessment via telephone 24 hours prior to your appointment to assess relative coronavirus infection risk. 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.
- In view of the potential seriousness of this disease, please note that we respectfully insist on the phone call the day before your appointment. If we are unable to speak with you, we will need to cancel your appointment. You may be charged for the appointment as per our normal terms and conditions.
- We would 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. 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/>

- Riverside Dental will be operating contactless payment systems where possible, and we request that payment is made over the phone as part of your pre-appointment triage phone call 24 hours before your appointment is due. Any fees due at the practice can be made via contactless methods using our terminal or if needed, pin entries on card terminals at reception. The card machine will be wiped after each use.
- When travelling to the practice, we would recommend that you limit close contact with other members of the public as far as possible. Please try and arrive a few minutes prior to your appointment and no earlier (or later). The front door will be locked while the receptionist finishes dealing with the current patient. More information will be provided on arrival via door posters and our A-Boards. 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. Please only bring essential items with you and avoid large items (e.g. large bags, cases, shopping etc.)



Arriving at 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.
- We regret that during this interim period, we will not be providing our normal tea and coffee services in the interests of reducing all opportunities for cross infection to a minimum, nor will we have any physical magazines or patient information literature available.
- When you enter the practice, we will welcome you, and ask you to hang your coat or jacket. You will be provided with a mask that you must wear at all times except when being treated. You will also be asked to put your valuables in a clean, clear bag (provided) and placed in a box that will be left at reception. The front door will remain locked, however we cannot accept liability for personal items so please limit what you bring into the building. We will take your temperature with a no-touch thermometer. If your temperature is above 37.8°C, we will be unable to proceed with your treatment and you will be asked to return home and self-isolate as per current government guidelines.
- You will be invited to use the hand sanitizer while the receptionist advises you of the next steps.
- 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.
- When the clinician is ready, the receptionist will direct you straight to the disinfected surgery.
- After leaving the surgery, you will be invited to wash your hands thoroughly for 30 seconds in the patient bathroom.
- Further appointments and any fees payable can then be made at reception prior to leaving. In some cases, we have made arrangements for this to be done in surgery in order to comply with social distancing.

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 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!
- Before some dental treatment begins, you may be asked to use a Hydrogen Peroxide mouthwash as a pre-rinse
- Rubber dam or other barrier mechanisms will be used for more procedures than previously.
- 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:
 - Use of our normal high-volume suction reduces aerosol production by over 90%. All 3 of our units have just been checked and produce in excess of the recommended suction power.
 - 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 95% 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 FFP2/3 masks.



Practice procedures

- The Riverside Dental team have spent an enormous amount of 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 & surgeries 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.
- We will also be using 3 state-of-the-art filtration units throughout the practice, specially designed for dental practices, to filter out viral and bacterial particles from the air.
- In addition we already have a fully integrated air conditioning system at the practice, which is serviced regularly. The heat exchange unit incorporated into this provides fresh air into every room while at the same time extracting “old” air at twice the recommended rate. Following advice from our air conditioning company, the heat exchange unit will be on as normal, with the air conditioning units in each room running on low fan. A cleaning cycle will be run at the end of each day.
- A fogging machine containing an ant-viral solution will also be used periodically to disinfect areas. You may see and hear this and it should be of no concern.
- Riverside Dental 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.

Summary

The vast majority of our patients are otherwise healthy without coronavirus infection and we are confident that we are able to provide normal 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. Any updates to this guidance will be found on our website.

If you have any questions regarding this policy or about your care at Riverside Dental please do not hesitate to contact us on: info@riversidedental.co.uk

Yours sincerely

Dr Bim Sawhney
Clinical Director & Practice Owner

