



Dr Neel Tank & Associates

1st June 2020

Post-COVID-19 return to work policy

This policy has been created based on multiple updated sources from within the dental and medical professions. It outlines modifications to our normal procedures that we intend to employ once dental practices can be reopened after the COVID-19 pandemic peak of infection 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 this long period of practice closure and for their understanding and cooperation whilst we implement new measures at the practice.

Provisional timetable

It is our intention for all staff members to return to work on Wednesday 1st July 2020 unless another lockdown is recommended by the government or professional bodies. The Imogen Dental team will spend an appropriate amount of time preparing the practice for reopening and practising updated procedures before patients return to the practice.

Patient communication before reopening

We would of course like to continue providing necessary dental care to all of our patients in the safest possible environment. We therefore respectfully request your full cooperation with any new or modified procedures at the practice.

We will be contacting patients with ongoing treatment and confirming appointments to continue with current courses of treatment during the second part of June. Our patients with ongoing or delayed courses of treatment will be prioritised in the first three months of opening along with urgent treatments.

We will request that all patients who are returning to Imogen Dental for treatment update their Medical History Questionnaire via the link below.

<https://imogendental.co.uk>

This includes a new, more detailed, section regarding your recent activity which will allow us to assess your level of risk for coronavirus infection before you attend the surgery.

New measures at Imogen Dental to reduce risk of COVID-19 transmission

Our normal cross-infection control protocols at Imogen Dental against all previously known pathogens are already woven into all clinical activity carried out at the practice. It should be remembered that the dental practice is already a very clean environment compared to public areas but it is not possible for us to control sources of infection outside the dental practice.

There have been multiple suggestions from many sources as to how the risk of transmission of COVID-19 can be reduced in a dental clinical environment. Some of these are straightforward and some of these are patently impractical when carrying out fine and detailed dental procedures.

We have collectively evaluated all of these and feel that the following measures will reduce risk to an acceptable 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 your completed Medical History Questionnaire at least 24 hours prior to 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 questionnaire. If we feel that you are a medium to high 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. However we will endeavour to make provision for even higher risk patients to have emergency treatment when required.
- We would recommend that patients in high-risk and extremely high-risk groups 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 higher or very high-risk group please see the link below:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/people-at-higher-risk-from-coronavirus/>

• In view of the potential seriousness of this disease, please note that we respectfully insist that where possible this Medical History Questionnaire is completed at least two days before your appointment. If we do not receive the completed questionnaire in time and we are unable to contact you for assessment of your current condition, we may cancel your appointment and inform you by email. You may be charged for the appointment if we are unable to fill it at short notice as per our normal terms and conditions

- Imogen Dental may request advance payment when your appointment is booked to reduce the requirement for unnecessary contact with other patients or use of card terminals at reception.
- When travelling to the practice, we would recommend that you limit your close contact with other members of the public as far as possible. If possible, we would ask that you attend your appointment alone. Please also ensure you visit the bathroom before leaving home as toilet facilities may be restricted.

Arriving at the practice

- We would like to eliminate waiting times in reception as much as possible so that you are not in close proximity to other patients. 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 would ask that you leave all belongings such as coats and bags in your vehicle.

- When you attend the practice, we will welcome you and digitally take your temperature. If your temperature is above 37.8°C, you will not be permitted to enter the practice and will be asked to return home and self-isolate as per current government guidelines.
- If you are well, we will direct you straight to the surgery and request that you do the following before commencing your appointment:
 - Thoroughly wash your hands for 30 seconds with the antiseptic hand wash provided
 - Carry out a 30 second medicated mouthwash and gargle. This has been shown to rapidly kill the virus and reduce any viral load even if you are asymptotically infected. Our clinical staff will be carrying out the same process at each session.
 - Don the appropriate PPE for your treatment to limit any aerosol absorption by your normal street clothes.

Practice procedures

- The Imogen Dental team will have spent time critically looking at every aspect of the practice with a view to removing all non-essential items in the open to reduce the number of objects that may act as fomites (surfaces on which microorganisms may reside and can potentially be the cause of cross infection). You will find that the practice may appear quite bare when you attend.
- All clinical and common areas including door handles and surfaces will be regularly disinfected at set times using hypochlorous acid solution (electrically activated water) which is potently viricidal against COVID-19 and other microorganisms and can be used safely on all work surfaces and indeed within dental water lines and for operative procedures. Imogen Dental has been using hypochlorous acid solution (Dentagard) for many years in its dental chairs and to disinfection work surfaces.
- Imogen Dental will be providing an additional 45-60 minute buffer period between patients after treatments to allow additional time for 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 can be made and confirmed by email or telephone to limit your time spent at reception.

Dental procedures

- All dental staff will be upgrading their personal protective equipment (PPE) in line with current recommendations and evidence including FFP2 and FFP3 masks, visors and protective clothing as appropriate. We apologise in advance for the necessary reduction in social interaction that this will necessitate. Whilst our garb 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 most dental treatments are aerosol-generating procedures (AGP's). It is almost impossible for us to carry out meaningful dental procedures without generation of some level of aerosol. Aerosol suspended in the air is a potential source of infection which we 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 which is also routine in the practice further reduces bio aerosols by a further 30 to 90%
 - Our regular 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 with use of high-volume suction, dental dam and FFP2 and, in high aerosol generating procedures such as hygienist visit for periodontal treatment, FFP3 masks as appropriate.

- At the end of your appointment, we will collect all of your protective equipment for disposal by incineration and you will be able to leave directly after your appointment.

Summary

We would like to be able to provide normal dental care for our 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 Imogen Dental please do not hesitate to contact us on Imogenbenson@yahoo.co.uk or imogendentalingsclere@yahoo.co.uk

Yours sincerely

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