

Dear Patient:

We hope this letter finds you and your family in good health.

You may have heard that dental practices can open to routine care from Monday 8 June.

We have already been one of the designated Urgent Dental Centres for the past 10 weeks treating emergency patients across Essex and have throughout this period had a team working 9-5 at the Benfleet Dental Studio. All our dentists have been involved in providing this care, alongside a reduced team of our fantastic nurses.

Our practices, The Benfleet Dental Clinic & Benfleet Dental Studio will be opening on the 8th June, 2020 but we just wanted to be clear that this may not be business as usual. The treatments you are offered may be different to those you received before, depending on staff and personal protection equipment (PPE) available. It will take some time before services return to what you previously experienced as normal. Please be patient.

Our community has been through a lot over the last few months, and all of us are looking forward to resuming our normal habits and routines. Whilst many things have changed, one thing has remained the same: our commitment to your safety.

Infection control has always been a top priority for our practice and you may have seen this during your visits to our surgery. Our infection control processes are made so that when you receive care, it's both safe and comfortable. We want to tell you about the infection control procedures we follow to keep patients and staff safe.

Our practice follows infection control guidelines made by the governing bodies. We are up-to-date on new guidance that has been issued. We do this to make sure that our infection control procedures are current and adhere to recommendations.

You may see some changes when it is time for your next appointment. We made these changes to help protect our patients and staff and have successfully managed this new pathway for the past 10 weeks. For example:

- Our practice will communicate with you beforehand to ask some screening questions. You'll be asked those same questions again at your appointment
- Provision of hand sanitiser that we will ask you to use when you enter the practice.
- We no longer offer magazines, children's toys and so forth, since those items are difficult to clean and disinfect
- Appointments will be managed to allow for social distancing between patients. That might mean that you're offered fewer options for scheduling your appointment.

We will do our best to allow greater time between patients to reduce waiting times for you, as well as to reduce the number of patients in the reception area at any one time.

How you can help:

- With the exception of children and patients with carers, patients should come alone

- Only one consenting adult will be able to escort a child.
- A distance of at least 2 metres must be observed if another patient is present in the dental practice
- Payment should be made by card where possible
- Staff will not shake your hand
- If you show symptoms following appointment booking, you should contact the practice by phone
- Please do not arrive early to the practice. Once you have checked in at reception you should then wait outside the practice until called in by a nurse.
- Please do not arrive without an appointment
- A face covering must be worn by anyone escorting a child or vulnerable adult into the building. This cannot be provided by the practice due to PPE shortages. All our PPE will be needed to treat our patients and protect staff and patients.

The welfare of our staff and patients is extremely important to us moving into this next stage in providing your dental care.

We look forward to welcoming everyone back

The Team at The Benfleet Dental Clinic & Benfleet Dental Studio