



APPOINTMENT PROTOCOL

At present we are still trying to recover from the repercussions of Covid -19 and having to be closed for face to face appointments for 8 weeks.

As you can imagine this has created a large backlog of patients that:

- We were forced to cancel during the lockdown
- Patients that called us during the lockdown that were in pain
- Patients that have been added to our waiting list since we re-opened that require treatment.

Our current waiting times for treatments are approx. 3 to 4 weeks. We can no longer offer treatments on the day of your check up like we would have done in the past. This is because we must keep patients and staff as safe as possible by keeping aerosol treatments (dental drills) and routine appointments completely separate.

Making contact with us

When you call the practice, the number may be engaged or you may be on hold for longer than you are used to, this is because we are extremely busy and are being flooded with phone calls. Please be patient with us, we are doing the very best that we can for our patients whilst we navigate through these difficult times. In the event of a dental emergency and we are unable to accommodate you, you must dial 111 and ask for the urgent care dental department.

Alternatively you can email your query at blackfen.dentalcare@nhs.net this email is manned constantly throughout the day so if you have trouble contacting us by phone please email us and we will get back to you straight away.

When you call to book an appointment we will run through our protocol with you, give you some information and ask you some questions. One of the first

things that will be explained to you is that although we are open for face to face appointments we are operating very differently. Before any check up can be made you must have a pre-exam triage phone call by the dentist and an assessment. If she decides you should have a check up then we shall book you for an appointment, otherwise she may defer you for 3 – 6 months.

If you want a check up but have a problem with a tooth then it maybe possible for reception staff to triage you themselves and get you in for an assessment. Please note there will be no treatment done on this appointment.

Check up with no scale and polish

Although we appreciate our patients like to have their teeth cleaned as part of their check up, in order to keep staff or anyone in the building as safe as possible it is not a service we can offer during the pandemic.

It is extremely important that even though we cannot offer this right now, we still check your oral health. When you have a check-up, we ensure you have no dental decay, that the soft tissues in your mouth are healthy and you show no sign of oral cancer. We encourage all patients to keep to their recall, but please bear in mind, those that clinically need a clean will need to wait until their next check-up or go on the aerosol waiting list.

Hygienist

At present we can not accommodate a hygienist as well as a dentist on site, this is due to what is called a fallow time when we use drills. We must leave the surgery for one hour to allow for aerosol to settle before anyone is aloud to enter again. The dentist must use all three rooms and rotate them in order to see patients for treatments – this must take priority. We can however book private cleans with the dentist on call for £70.00 – please ask reception for details.

Appointment times

As we always do, we will try to accommodate your request for certain times as best we can. Please bear in mind that right now appointments are very limited and we may need you to be more flexible.

Protocol

The door will be locked when you arrive for your appointment – please arrive at your appointment time in case it is raining and wait for us outside. You do not need to knock we know you are waiting and will come for you when the patient inside has left.

Please come wearing a mask, we request you wear a mask even in the surgery when speaking with the dentist at a distance of 2 metres. When she is ready to look inside your mouth you can remove the mask. We ask when you move from the dental chair you put the mask back on before you speak, and wear it until you leave the building.

Please come alone, if you require a chaperone on medical grounds please let us know so we can accommodate you.

Your temperature will be taken on arrival, sometimes if it is warm outside or you have walked you might appear to have a temperature when in fact you do not. In this instance we will ask you to stand in the shade and re-test you again 10 minutes later – please do not be offended if we ask to re-test you, its for the safety of everyone including yourself.

You will be asked to wash or sanitise your hands on arrival and then be escorted to reception where we ask you to sign consent forms before taking you into the surgery to see the dentist.

Please bring a list of any current medication you take

In order to keep staff and patients safe it is important that each patient is audited for Covid-19 the day before or the day of their appointment.

You will be asked the following -

- Do you or anyone in your house have any Covid or flu like symptoms currently or in the last 7 days?
- Have you or anyone in your house testing positive for Covid in the last 14 days?

- Are you waiting for Covid test results to come back from either a home kit or from a test centre?
- Are you on the vulnerable list with any health conditions that increase your risk of complications arising from Covid? If no are you shielding anyone in the house that does?
- Have you been notified by the NHS track and trace that you have come in contact with anyone with Covid?

Informing you of any risk

If a member of staff falls ill with Covid-19 symptoms within two weeks of your visit, you will be notified by us immediately and advised what to do next.

Please ensure that you also notify us if you fall ill with Covid-19 symptoms within two weeks of visiting the practice.

Thank you and stay safe
Blackfen Dental care