



Dr Neel Tank & Associates

5th January 2021 – Version 2 (updated since Version 1, June 2020)

Work policy – during COVID-19 pandemic

This policy has been created based on multiple recent sources from within the dental and medical professions. It outlines the new protocols and procedures, as well as our current ones, that we are implementing during working throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

It is not known at this time whether these procedures are temporary or whether they will become a permanent working environment, to ensure patient and staff safety in the future. The COVID-19 pandemic is still being studied, and so policies are subject to change along with scientific evidence over time.

Imogen Dental would like to thank our patients for their understanding and cooperation whilst we now implement enhanced measures, protocols, and procedures. These are present to keep our patients, team, and families safe.
Provisional timetable

All staff members have returned to work and are working hard to ensure all protocols, policies and procedures are followed. The Imogen Dental team spent a considerable amount of time preparing the practice for reopening in July 2020 and practised updated procedures before patients returned to the practice.

Patient communication

The Imogen Dental team are delighted that we can continue providing necessary dental care for patients and have ensured we are providing our care in the safest possible environment.

Therefore, we respectfully request for your full cooperation and understanding with any new or modified procedures at the practice. All patients who had ongoing treatment prior to the first national lockdown have now been contacted. We will continue treating all patients with current ongoing courses of treatment.

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 carried out at the practice. It should be remembered that the dental practice is already a highly hygienic environment compared to public areas, however, it is not possible for us to control sources of infection outside the dental practice.

Multiple sources are known 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 particular dental procedures.

We have collectively evaluated all of these and know that the following measures will reduce this risk to an acceptable level at the practice. Please be assured that our clinical staff will all 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 COVID-19 Screening Questionnaire at least 24 hours prior to your appointment. Our staff will contact you to remind you of this if we have not received your completed questionnaire.

- 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. However, we will endeavour to make provisions 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 your COVID-19 Screening Questionnaire is completed at least 24 hours prior to your appointment. If we do not receive the completed questionnaire in time and we are unable to contact you for assessment of your risk, 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 unnecessary contact with other patients or use of card terminals at reception.

- If possible, we would ask that you attend your appointment alone. Please also ensure you visit the bathroom before leaving home as toilet facilities are currently closed for patients.

Arriving at the practice

- To eliminate waiting times in reception as much as possible so that you are not in close proximity to other patients, appointments will be staggered.

- Where possible, we ask that you leave all belongings such as coats and bags in your vehicle.
- When you arrive at the practice please press the doorbell and wait for a member of staff to welcome you. We will then digitally take your temperature. If your temperature is above 37.8°C, you will not be permitted to enter the practice.
- If you are well, we will ask you to observe social distancing whilst waiting in the reception area until a member of staff direct you to a surgery.

Practice procedures

- The Imogen Dental team will have assessed every aspect of the practice with a view to removing all non-essential items 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 after each patient using hypochlorous acid solution (electrically activated water) which is potently viricidal against COVID-19 and other microorganisms. Imogen Dental has been using this hypochlorous acid solution (Dentiguard) for many years as a disinfectant.
- Imogen Dental will be providing an additional 30-minute period between patients after treatments to allow for decontamination procedures.
- All future appointments can be made and confirmed by email or telephone to limit your time spent at reception.

Dental procedures

- All dental staff have upgraded their personal protective equipment (PPE) in line with current recommendations and evidence including FFP3 masks, visors and protective clothing. We apologise in advance for the necessary reduction in social interaction that this necessitates. Whilst our PPE may make us appear impersonal and distant, please be assured we are still the same friendly team underneath it all!
- We are mindful that most dental treatments are aerosol-generating procedures (AGP's). Aerosol suspended in the air is a potential source of infection which we wish to keep to a minimum. Currently the dental literature suggests:
 - o Our use of our normal high-volume suction reduces aerosol production by over 90%.
 - o The use of dental rubber dam, which is also routine in the practice, further reduces bio aerosols by a further 30 to 90%.
 - o Our regular facemasks filter approximately 60% of remaining airborne particles.

o FFP3 masks filter 99% of airborne particles in both directions (patient to clinician and clinician to patient).

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.

This policy will be continually reviewed and updated when necessary.

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 imogendentalgingsclere@yahoo.co.uk

Yours sincerely

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