

An update on impacts of the pandemic on the provision of NHS dentistry.

If you have seen your dentist since the pandemic began you may well have been asked specific questions to ensure your care is delivered as safely as possible. These questions are now being expanded. In addition to Covid specific questions you will also be asked about respiratory symptoms e.g. coughs and colds.

If you have any symptoms that indicate you have a respiratory illness, you may be asked to postpone your appointment until you are fully recovered. However, if your treatment is deemed to be urgent, you will be seen, but you may be asked to come back at a later time when there are no other patients at the practice. Please answer these questions accurately and honestly as possible. They are designed to keep everyone as safe as possible.

The additional time it will take to ask these questions might cause dentists' phone lines to be busier than normal, but please bear with us.

Dental Practices have been re-opened for over a year now, and during this time, mitigations put into practice to reduce the risk of Covid transmission have limited the ability of dentists to see as many patients as they did prior to the pandemic.

**As a result of this and the recent rise in infections, with the additional staff absences due to members of the dental team having to isolate, our ability to see patients as we would like is further reduced.**

We plan to remain open and provide face to face care for as long as we safely can, scaling back to providing an emergency service only if needed, and utilising our contingency arrangements, such as "buddy practices", where you may be asked to attend another practice at a different location. We hope this would be a short lived arrangement and only used when we cannot operate safely. This is part of our contingency planning. If you are asked to reschedule routine care as a result of this, we can only apologise but hope you can understand why.

If you cannot attend for any reason, please ensure you contact the practice. Doing so allows appointments to be reallocated to those that need them. The numbers of patients not attending is increasing and this too, is having an impact on our ability to offer timely care.

Further information and useful resources are online as follows:

- General advice regarding Coronavirus: [www.nhsinform.scot](http://www.nhsinform.scot)
- A short video describing NHS Dental Care: <https://youtu.be/2BXCPJqliqw>
- Accessing dental care: <https://www.nhsinform.scot/illnesses-and-conditions/infections-and-poisoning/coronavirus-covid-19/healthy-living/coronavirus-covid-19-accessing-dental-services>