

Information for patients accessing dental care in Greater Manchester

October 2020

Every dental practice in Greater Manchester is now open and able to offer patients face-to-face care, although the level of service and number of available appointments have not yet returned to pre-COVID levels due to additional personal protective equipment (PPE) and infection prevention and control (IPC) requirements and current government guidance relating to social distancing measures.

Practices are working on safely restoring services and are committed to prioritising care for high risk patients and children and the completion of pre-COVID treatment plans, whilst maintaining capacity for unscheduled care.

What are dental appointments like?

Practices are using personal protective equipment and social distancing measures to keep patients and staff safe.

- If you call to make an appointment, you will be asked some screening questions. You will also be asked the same questions again at your appointment
- You will probably be asked to use hand sanitiser or to wash your hands when you arrive (and again before you leave)
- You will also find that waiting rooms might look a little different with two metre markers in place
- You will also notice that the dental team may be wearing different protective equipment to what you are used to seeing
- Appointments will be managed to allow for social distancing between patients. That might mean that you're offered fewer options for scheduling your appointment.

Referrals for certain procedures

Some procedures won't be offered right away in every practice. The supply of essential personal protective equipment (particularly certain masks) dictates whether a dentist can offer aerosol-generating procedures. As a result, some practices may need to refer their patients to urgent dental centres for treatment.

How you can help:

- With the exception of children and persons in need, patients should come alone
- A distance of at least two metres must be observed if another patient is present in the dental practice
- 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. If necessary, you should wait outside the practice
- Please do not arrive without an appointment
- Patients should attend wearing a mask if possible or be prepared to wear one
- If asked to send in photographs of your children's teeth, first watch this helpful [video on how to photograph children's teeth](#)

It will likely be some time before dental services return to what you previously experienced as normal.

However, your dental teams will be doing all they can to ensure you receive the treatment you require in the safest way.

What if I have a dental emergency?

If you are in pain and feel you need urgent dental care, you can contact your dental practice between 9am and 5pm, Monday to Friday. Please do not visit without calling first.

Your dentist will talk to you over the phone and will be able to offer advice and discuss your options. If your dentist thinks you need urgent treatment, you will be referred to one of the urgent care treatment hubs in Greater Manchester where basic treatment may be offered. You may need to travel to access face to face treatment.

For urgent dental care when your dental practice is closed (e.g. overnight, weekends and bank holidays) call the Greater Manchester Urgent Dental Care Service on 0333 332 3800 (freephone).

What if I'm not registered with a dentist?

Call the Greater Manchester Urgent Dental Care Service on 0333 332 3800 (freephone).

To find dental practices in your area, go to www.gmhsc.org.uk/gm-service-finder.