

Information for patients and referring dentists in relation to COVID 19

Like everyone at this difficult time, we at Vermilion are eager to promote the health of all of our patients, their families and our staff. We aim to provide an environment for your dental care that is safe and does not put you at risk. With that in mind we want to share the information which we have at this stage about the current guidelines for how dental practices should operate during the COVID 19 outbreak. The situation is changing rapidly and we will try to keep you updated as much as possible.

From 18th March the Chief Dental Officer for Scotland has advised the following:

- **All aerosol generating procedures should cease.** What does that mean? An aerosol generating procedure, or AGP, is a dental treatment where water from instruments, working at high speeds in your mouth, combines to produce a spray. This is controlled by the dental nurse with the suction equipment. This spray is why all dentists, hygienists and nurses wear uniforms, protective masks, visors and gloves which they change frequently. It is also why you will have seen our dental nurses cleaning dental and non-dental surfaces in the surgery as you leave and carefully taking away all instruments for sterilisation. Where possible we aim to use single-use instruments and devices and that will not change. In Vermilion the particular treatments affected by aerosol generating procedures are scaling of teeth with ultrasonic instruments and any drilling with high speed drills, unless during an endodontic procedure where a protective rubber dam is used. We can continue to clean your teeth, in some circumstances, using conventional hand scaling instruments. Root fillings, in some cases, can proceed. This guidance means that for some patients, appointments with the periodontists, hygienists and endodontist will be delayed at present or parts of your treatment will not be carried out in conventional ways. We are working hard in the background to come up with ways we can support you to provide intermediate advice and treatments to keep your mouth healthy and comfortable. We plan to contact patients who this may affect on an individual basis to explain what we have planned.
- **Delivery of urgent and non-urgent dental care to patients with no symptoms of COVID 19 can be carried out as usual in a dental practice setting.** In the practice setting, treatment will be aimed at pain relief and other planned treatments without generating an AGP, except in exceptional cases where that cannot be avoided. Dentists now have specific instructions about minimising our occupational risks and we at Vermilion will be following those guidelines and keeping up to date with current practice for urgent and non-urgent cases.
- **Dental teams are required to find out by phone or text if a patient is potentially infected prior to their visit.** Our reception team will be working hard to contact every booked patient by text or phone to establish as far as possible if you are at risk or have active disease. Please bear with us, we are not being nosey, simply trying to keep everyone safe.

- **Patients in vulnerable groups should be offered delayed treatment to reduce their need for travel and close contact in waiting rooms and with dental team staff.** If that is the case for you please let us know, and we will aim to reschedule visits and support you with interim advice. At this stage we are working as a team to see how that will operate, please bear with us and keep in touch.
- **Patients with known COVID 19 infection who need AGPs to relieve pain will be treated for relief of that pain by designated dentists, with full protective equipment, in special NHS urgent care centres.** This service will be operated by the NHS, via NHS 24. Your general dentist and we at Vermilion can help you if you have acute dental pain by seeing if there is a way to relieve your pain without involving a visit to a dentist, by pointing you in the right direction if we are not able to help and advising you about methods of pain control. Our reception teams, dental nurses and dentists will continue to be available to discuss any concerns by phone or video link.
- **All unnecessary items should be removed from surfaces within the clinic.** For us at Vermilion that means there will be no magazines in the waiting room, no flowers as you come in, no tea or coffee available and all the surgeries may look a little bare. Please feel free to bring (and take away) your own water, book or music source to keep you occupied while you wait.
- **Use standard and robust cleaning practices following the national guidelines to keep the environment clean.** We have always followed strict national guidelines but are aiming to be particularly vigilant in the current climate. You may see our staff wiping down door handles and PIN machines, this is for everyone's safety. One way you can help at your visit is by bringing along, and taking away, your own pen to fill in any of our forms.

In addition to the advice from the Chief Dental Officer, we at Vermilion are implementing the following:

- **Asking all patients to use the outside bathrooms and wash their hands for the advised 20 seconds with soap and warm water before entering the clinic.** Feel free to sing and choose your own song!
- **Strictly following the advice about self-isolation for people who have coughs and a temperature.** We will have a hand-held thermometer with which we will be taking your temperature when you arrive at the reception desk. This will be done as discreetly and sensitively as possible. At home you can record your temperature before you come in to the clinic and let us know by phone if it is raised. If it is, at that point we will ask you not to come in to the clinic but to rearrange your appointment and advise you to follow government advice. Our staff will be recording their temperatures as they arrive and anyone with a raised temperature or a cough will be sent home to seek further advice and self-isolate.

We as a team are hoping to support you in many new and innovative ways while the risk of infection is ongoing. Some of those we don't even know about yet, but this crisis has given us a chance to step back, think again and challenge ourselves as a team to provide even more avenues for care. We hope you bear with us as we learn and enjoy our new alternative options.

If you have any concerns please contact us to chat. Our reception team will listen and advise if they can. If they feel you need further advice they will arrange for one of the dental

nurses or dentists to call you when they have finished patient care for the session. The usual contact number applies 0131 334 1802 or by email at smile@vermilion.co.uk

Stay well, stay safe and look after yourself and your families.

The Vermilion Team