



To Our Valued Patients...WELCOME BACK!!

Your health and safety have always been our #1 priority. COVID-19 has only deepened our commitment to you.

Our office adheres to stringent procedures including those outlined in the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Guidelines for Infection Control in Dental Health-Care Settings. The thorough and rigorous cleaning, sterilization and disinfection of all instruments and surfaces are routine and second nature for us, as they are throughout dentistry. We believe it is because our profession takes such extreme precautions that dental offices are highly uncommon sources of disease transmission at large scale.

You might not realize everything we do to help keep our patients—and ourselves—safe. That's why we'd like to take this opportunity and explain the many steps we always follow in more detail, as well as the additional precautions we've implemented specifically to address COVID-19.

### How We Disinfect Exam and Treatment Rooms



Before you enter the clinical room, all surfaces have been cleaned and disinfected. This includes but is not necessarily limited to the dental chair, light, drawer handles and countertops. We disinfect everything that has been touched or could have been touched. Any protective covers that are necessary are single use and replaced after each patient. The chemicals we use are professional grade, high level surface disinfectants designed specifically for clinical environments. We also wash our hands frequently, and always before and after seeing patients.

### **How We Sterilize Instruments**



Just as in doctor's offices or hospitals, we use certain non-disposable items like handpieces (commonly known as drills) and other instruments. These are all carefully cleaned and sterilized using special equipment in a designated area of our practice. We use precision tools like ultrasonic baths to thoroughly clean our instruments, and hospital grade autoclaves to sterilize them. We also use tests and indicators to monitor these processes, and visually inspect instruments at every step. Once again, cleaners, detergents and other chemicals being used are designed specifically for clinical, not household, use.

### **How We Use Disposable Items**

We use as many disposable items as possible, such as needles, gloves, masks, etc. After each patient, disposable items are carefully discarded according to current guidelines and all members of the treatment team thoroughly wash their hands.

## How We're Responding To COVID-19



We're taking extra precautions to prevent the spread of COVID-19 including:

- Cleaning our office using products from the EPA's list of high level surface disinfectants for use against COVID-19.
- Carefully following all national, state and local guidelines, including the CDC's specific recommendations for our care providers to use Personal Protective Equipment like masks, eye

protection, etc. • Pre-screening patients and not treating anyone with a fever, cough or other symptoms of respiratory illness. • Not allowing staff members to work if they are experiencing any respiratory symptoms. • Taking extra care to regularly wipe down common touchpoints like door handles. • Streamlining our procedures for check-in, removing unnecessary items from our reception area, asking patients to come alone for their appointments. We're asking patients to remain in their vehicle upon arrival and check in. Upon entering the office, we encourage you to wear a facemask, we can provide one if needed. We've installed a hand sanitizer station at the front desk, and ask all patients to use this before going back to the clinical area

### **How We're Protecting Ourselves**



We would not be providing care if we were concerned that we could not do so safely. The comprehensive steps we've always used to clean, sanitize and create a healthy environment continue to protect us today. We believe the additional actions we're taking to prevent the spread of COVID-19 are effective, including carefully following the CDC's new guidelines. Just like you, we have family and loved ones who rely on us, so working safely is extremely important to us.



## How We're Welcoming You Back



You'll notice some changes in advance of your next appointment. We'll be calling you prior to your arrival to screen you for any symptoms which would require us to postpone your appointment and direct you to your healthcare provider for treatment. On that call, we can also answer any questions you may have and explain our new procedures for when you arrive to your appointment. We will take your temperature, or screen you in person for symptoms prior to your appointment. While these steps are inconvenient, they are necessary to ensure we're doing everything we can to protect all of our patients as well as our team.

Dental care is important in order to stay healthy and prevent minor issues from progressing into painful, complex and expensive conditions. We understand that during times like these, it is important to weigh the risks and benefits of treatment. If you're in any doubt, we encourage you to use the information in this letter to discuss the situation with your healthcare provider.

As we all return to a more normal routine—going to hair appointments, shopping in more stores, seeing friends and loved ones, taking our vehicles for service, visiting dry cleaners-people are taking extra care to ensure our safety. Please rest assured that our office is likely one of the most thoroughly cleaned and disinfected environments you can possibly be in.

We've missed you and all of our patients, and look forward to seeing you again soon!

Sincerely,

Dr. Doug Clark