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Coronavirus - COVID-19
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healthwatch
Brighton and Hove

Coronavirus (COVID-19) Information about seeing a dentist

Should you have any questions or require further information please contact us by email: office@healthwatchbrightonandhove.co.uk

Seeing a dentist

This guide provides information about seeing a dentist at this current time.

Healthwatch is currently aware that many people are experiencing difficulties accessing NHS dental treatment. We have made a number of enquiries and raised this as matter for concern to NHS England, Healthwatch England, our local Clinical Commissioning Group, and other bodies.

COVID-19 has presented difficulties for dentists to treat their patients safely and offer a normal service. We understand that most dentists have opened again but are offering limited treatments. Our current advice is to continue to check with your own or a local dentist or call 111 as they can provide the most up to date information. If you continue to be unsuccessful in seeking a dentist, please alert NHS England on 0300 311 2233.

If you require urgent dental treatment you can contact one of the following out of hours services:

- Brighton and Hove - If your own dentist is closed, the Emergency Dental Service will give you an appointment at one of several practices around Brighton and Hove. Contact: 03001 231663 (09:00-17:00 Monday to Friday). iDental Care Limited offers emergency NHS out of hours dental service. Call: 03000 242548 (17:30-22:30 Monday-Friday, 9:00-17:30 weekends)
- Crawley - 01293 518541
- Worthing - 01903 230364
- Chichester - 01243 793697
- Haywards Heath - 01444 440695

If this is unsuccessful, please call 111.

For additional advice and information about treatment you might wish to:

- Read this guide
- Or contact the Oral Health Foundation www.dentalhealth.org

We are sorry we are unable to offer clearer information about this situation at this time. Please be assured Healthwatch is aware of the issue and continues to feedback your concerns.



In May, the government [announced that dentists could resume normal services from 8 June](#). And [from July](#) practices resume face to face appointments.

Practices are not yet able to offer a full service due to COVID restrictions. Patients should follow the advice for accessing dental services set out in this document and continue to contact their dentist in the first instance for advice. We have included some answers to frequently asked questions.

KEY POINTS

- ✓ At present, you may encounter problems getting routine dental care. Whilst many dental practices have reopened, dentists are able to see far fewer patients per day than normal (5-7 rather than 30) because of social distancing, and the requirement to have “fallow” periods between patients (this is roughly an hour between patients to allow for a deep clean and to lessen any risk of coronavirus onward transmission). There is also a backlog of patients who need to be seen as a consequence of the closure of practices during lockdown and practices. Practices may temporarily struggle to see any new patients.
- ✓ You should contact a dentist if you require medical help. You should contact the dental practice you are registered with first, or any dental practice near to your home if you are not registered with one.
- ✓ Face to face dental appointments have resumed, but practices will only do so where it is safe to do so. The decision is for individual practices to make when they have the safety requirements in place.
- ✓ Dentists are continuing to provide advice by telephone, to prescribe medications such as pain relief and antibiotics for a suspected infection.

URGENT DENTAL CARE

- ✓ If a dentist thinks you need to be seen for urgent treatment, they may make a referral to an Urgent Dental Care Hubs (UDCs). Please note that you cannot self-refer to one of these Hubs.
- ✓ You can still be referred to a Hub for urgent dental treatment if you have symptoms of COVID-19 or are vulnerable or shielding, although you will be seen at dedicated sites only.
- ✓ Some Hubs are based outside of Brighton, but support is available to help you travel to these sites.

Appointments, and telephone / online consultations

- If you require dental treatment, please call your own dental practice (or the nearest practice to you if you are not already registered with one) to confirm what their opening arrangements are, and what services they are currently able to offer.
- You may need to leave a message with your name, contact phone number and a brief description of your dental emergency as best as possible.
- **You must advise the dental practice if you are either shielding, or self-isolating because you have symptoms of COVID-19 or if this applies to**



anyone in your home. You will be contacted by a member of the dental team to arrange an appointment, which may be a telephone consultation.

- As with any medical appointment you should ensure that you have a private space in which to discuss your concerns over the phone.

Finding a dentist

- You can find the contact details for a local dentist by putting in your postcode to the [NHS.uk](https://www.nhs.uk) search facility.

New costs

- Some private practices may make an additional charge to cover both PPE costs and the costs associated with needing to have a “fallow” time between patients which reduces the number of patients each dentist could see. The practice price list should explain these costs, but you are advised to check beforehand. We are not currently aware of NHS dentists making this charge. We have heard of a range of charges from £5 up to £90.

Urgent Dental Care centres

- Urgent Dental Care centres (also known as Hubs) have been set up to meet the dental needs of people during the current pandemic:
 1. Patients with COVID-19 symptoms, or for those living in their household
 2. Patients who are ‘shielding’ or considered to be at most-significant risk from COVID-19
 3. Other patients who require urgent treatment.
- There are several Hubs across Sussex. The addresses of these sites are not being publicised as access is by referral by a dentist only.
- If a dentist refers you to a Hub you will be assessed to determine if your condition requires treatment on the same day, or as soon as possible.

Shielding or vulnerable patients

- If you are [shielding](#) or self-isolating and need to be urgently seen for dental treatment there are Urgent Dental Centres in Brighton or Chichester.

Help travelling to a dental hub

- Please advise the dental practice and the person you speak to at a Hub that you require assistance travelling to the Hub.
- Help travelling to a dentist or hub is available from the [NHS Volunteer Responder Scheme](#).

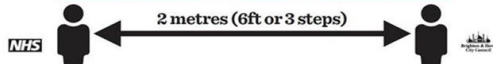
Oral and Maxillo-facial services

- There has been an increase in referrals and demand is expected to remain higher than usual for some time. Waiting times from referral to being seen may be longer than usual.
- The backlog of urgent cases is being worked through and a recovery plan is being made to get back to seeing non-urgent cases.



Re-opening of NHS dental services from 8 June
Frequently Asked Questions

Question	Answer
<p>Have all dental practices opened for face to face appointments?</p>	<p>Practices started to open <u>from</u> 8th June. NHS England has issued advice to all practices that it expects them to resume face to face appointments from 20th July. All practices however need to be sure it is safe for their patients and staff to provide face to face treatments.</p> <p>The decision to open is for individual practices to make when they have the safety requirements in place for face to face care.</p> <p>Individual dental practices need to ensure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • that testing arrangements for their own staff are in place • they have adequate protective equipment • how to reconfigure their practices to allow for social distancing <p>You should contact your dentist or check their website for more information (or contact any dental practice near to your home if you are not already registered with one).</p>
<p>Is there a date by which practices are expected to be open for face to face appointments?</p>	<p>Please see above. The requirements regarding safety apply as above.</p> <p>Any practices which cannot open for face to face appointments will continue to provide advice by phone, as well as analgesia for pain and antibiotics for infections if appropriate.</p> <p>They will also continue to refer patients on for urgent dental treatment (see below).</p>
<p>What sorts of treatment can dentists offer?</p>	<p>In addition to advice by phone, and analgesia and antibiotics, dentists may be able to provide treatment such as temporary fillings and denture adjustments. But you must check with your dentist first.</p>



	<p>Due to safety risks, dentists may not be able offer the full range of treatments which require Aerosol Generating Procedures (AGP) e.g. where drilling is required. Treatments which require the use of AGPs will be provided at Urgent Dental Care centres where appropriate.</p>
<p>How do I get to see an NHS dentist at the moment?</p>	<p>At present, you may encounter problems getting routine dental care. Whilst many dental practices have reopened, dentists are able to see far fewer patients per day than normal (5-7 rather than 30) because of social distancing, and the requirement to have “fallow” periods between patients (this is roughly an hour between patients to allow for a deep clean and to lessen any risk of coronavirus onward transmission).</p> <p>There is also a backlog of patients who need to be seen as a consequence of the closure of practices during lockdown and practices may not be able to accept new patients at present - although it is hoped that this will be a temporary issue.</p> <p>In the first instance, you should contact your dentist and seek their advice (or any dentist if you are not registered with one). You should explain if your condition is urgent as you may be referred to an Urgent Dental Care centre.</p> <p>Alternatively, you can call the Emergency Dental Service can be contacted on 0300 123 1663 (09:00-17:00 Monday to Friday)</p>
<p>Will dentists have access to Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)?</p>	<p>Yes. All dentists should be able to obtain PPE. Please be aware that due to increased costs some of this cost may be passed on (to private patients only).</p>
<p>Are Urgent Dental Care hubs continuing to provide services?</p>	<p>Yes, at this present time. Urgent Dental Centres (UDCs) have been set up across Sussex to provide emergency dental care, including to those who are shielding or vulnerable. UDCs will continue to provide treatment to support the rest of the dental system as it moves towards resumption of normal service.</p>

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What is happening to other specialist dental services?

Community Dental Services, Orthodontic, Oral Surgery and Restorative services began opening from 8 June. These services will have to go through the same assessment processes as general dental practices to ensure safe provision of care.

There may be delays in being referred on to, and being seen, at these services.

Hospitals are also starting to provide more planned care, but this will also be a phased return to normal services.

If a patient needs to be seen urgently then they may be referred to the Urgent Dental Care hub who can access more specialist support if required.