

Dear Valued Patient,

We are gradually resuming elective dental procedures (per the MN Board of Dentistry), and along with our already rigorous infection control practices, we'll be implementing additional measures to help mitigate health concerns. Comfort and safety for our patients, and dental team, is always our most important priority. In reopening, however, challenges exist in staffing and PPE availability. Your patience and understanding will be appreciated as we deliver care in this new "era" of dentistry.

### **Protocol Changes**

At your next appointment, there will be noticeable changes in both the reception area and treatment operatories. These include:

- You'll be asked to hand sanitize upon entering and leaving our office.
- Meredith, our Patient Coordinator, will be positioned behind a clear plastic barrier.
- You'll be asked COVID screening questions when you schedule/confirm an appointment, and again when you arrive at our office.
- Chairs positioned to allow for 6 feet of social distancing separation will be placed both in our reception area and in the foyer located outside our office door.
- Magazines, newspapers, the coffee maker and children's toys/books have been removed from the reception area as these items can not be adequately sanitized.
- Prior to your treatment, your temperature will be taken with a "non-contact" thermometer to further screen your immediate health status. (Our dental team will also be screened daily.)
- Your treatment providers will wear masks throughout their contact with you. Handshakes and social physical contact are discouraged.
- We request that ONLY patients be allowed in treatment operatories, and to limit ONE accompanying visitor (i.e., parent, guardian, relative, friend) wearing a face covering in the reception area. NOTE: We will not provide face masks.
- While we recognize the inconvenience, we're refraining from scheduling both parents and children at the same appointment time to minimize risks posed by unsupervised children in our reception area.
- Any patient treatment/insurance copays will be due on DAY of treatment. Our challenge to remain a viable practice is as much financial as it is about our patients' oral health.

### **Appointments**

To avoid overwhelming our staff with phone calls, messages and emails, we will call you to reschedule any missed hygiene or restorative appointments. (Obviously, patients with emergent needs take precedence.) In the meantime, a "live voice" will not answer our phones while we work to "catch-up", so expect to leave a voicemail, which we'll return promptly during our open hours, Monday through Thursday.

Patients will still receive hygiene recall reminders from our automated system, but please wait three weeks before contacting us to schedule. Patients who missed hygiene appointments during our 8 weeks of closure are our first concern. With our considerable backlog of missed hygiene appointments a priority, requests for a specific hygienist can not be guaranteed.

Please provide us the courtesy of **at least 24 hour notification** if any future appointment must be cancelled, and understand that our scheduling demands may mean months before a missed appointment can be rescheduled.

We appreciate your cooperation and continued loyalty as we learn to navigate this “new normal” in dental care together.

We are available to assist with any questions you may have regarding the above guidelines.

Thank you,

Dr. Bruce Merry  
Dr. Eva Lau  
and Dental Team