

Dear Patient

I hope you are keeping well and staying safe.

I wanted to send all of my patients an email to shed some clarity and provide advice about your ongoing orthodontic care in these unprecedented and uncertain times.

Unfortunately, due to the COVID-19 pandemic the Department of Health, British Dental Association and British Orthodontic Society have instructed all practices to shut down for routine and non-emergency treatments. By order of the Chief Dental Officer all routine and non-emergency appointments have to be postponed until further notice. As such, we have been informed that orthodontics regrettably falls under the category of non-urgent or routine dental treatments and therefore any routine appointments need to be postponed until further notice from the Government. As regrettable as this is, it's unfortunately beyond our control and these instructions sent by the Government are in place to help protect you, your families, staff and reduce spread of COVID-19.

For those of you who have come to know me throughout your treatment, you will know that my patients are always my priority and I will go above and beyond for you, which means that this news was not taken lightly by any means. Since, it is completely out of my hands, I will endeavour to do all that I can to support you with advice in these unpredictable times.

I would like to take this opportunity to reassure those that are worried, that having the braces on for a longer period of time, will not cause you harm provided you take good care i.e. reduce snacking, brush your teeth after meals with fluoride toothpaste and only drink plain still water outside of meals (please refer to your orthodontic care package given to you at the start for full instructions). For patients at the:

1. Start/middle of treatment, staying in braces for a little longer can sometimes help with the movement of the teeth, so please rest assured it may have some benefit.
2. Nearing the end of treatment, I know you have very much been looking forward to having the braces removed and it is with my greatest regret and sympathies that this is going to be delayed for you. However, please rest assured that remaining in braces for a little longer, although undesirable, will not cause you harm and in fact may help retain/stabilise the teeth in their final position prior to removal of the brace.

At the moment, we do not know when dental practices will be allowed to re-open, but please rest assured that we will be one of the first ones to re-open as soon as the government allows us to do so. Upon re-opening, patients whose appointments have been cancelled will be prioritised. Therefore, I would like to ask other pre-booked patients to please be kind and understand that there will be a back log of appointments to deal with and therefore we will most likely need to postpone everyone's appointment to allow us to manage the backlog. This will of course, inadvertently lengthen the treatment duration for all our patients and the choice of specific appointment times or days will be limited, for which I can only sincerely apologise.

In the meantime, please note that the practice is allowed to stay open for dental emergencies which include:

1. Severe pain for over 48 hours
2. Facial swelling

3. Trauma or uncontrolled bleeding

For those that require urgent emergency treatment in line with the above , feel free to call the practice emergency telephone number on 02083037051

Please note that orthodontic emergencies unfortunately do not fall in that category and therefore if you have a wire cutting the cheek, causing severe trauma that hasn't been relieved by orthodontic wax, please note that a clinician will be able to see you but ONLY for trimming the wire. Please note that adjustments or regluing of broken brackets cannot be carried out, in accordance with Government guidance. Please note that if you have a broken brace or retainer you will need to wait until the Government allows us to re-open, as regrettably there is nothing we can do at the moment.

I would like to take this opportunity to apologise for the inconvenience caused to you all and although it is completely out of our hands, we will endeavour to do all I can in the background to update/advise you in these unprecedented and uncertain times and get services back up and running as soon as we are instructed by the Government. If your appointment is affected, you will receive a call from us.

With Best Wishes,

Dr Nina Shaffie and The Sandford Team.