



BELHAVEN DENTAL SURGERY

Patient newsletter November 2020

This newsletter will provide you with up to date information about everything happening at Belhaven , what our latest policies and procedures are, treatments available, appointment protocols and our Covid 19 changes.

We hope you find this informative, please read the information in full and if you have any questions please email us on info@belhavendentalsurgery.co.uk or call 01475 741186 to speak to a member of our reception team

Follow us on Facebook for regular updates on what is happening at Belhaven

Welcome

This time last year, none of us could have predicted the changes we have seen in the world.

Initially when we closed on 23rd March, we really thought it would be for a short period, and we would soon be back to business as usual in no time.

Even the thought of cancelling a month of appointments seemed drastic to begin with (thank goodness for our computer system which made this task easier). Little did we realise we would be closed for a lot longer.

During that time though, we were keeping busy. We were answering the phones daily to triage emergency patients, and each of our dentists did some work at the urgent dental care centres at Greenock and Paisley. The practice was repainted inside and we used this time to have an overhaul of all our equipment and surgery organisation.

Since 22nd June, we have gradually phased in our opening, and now have all staff back to pretty much their full-time hours.

We have had to make many changes within the practice which will be explained in more detail. These changes are so that we are doing everything we can to minimise contact between people – our busy waiting room all but a distant memory, and to allow us to keep our business functioning in these difficult times.



BELHAVEN DENTAL SURGERY

OUR DENTISTS

Opening Hours

- Changes we have had to make mean that we cannot for the foreseeable future use all 5 of our treatment rooms at the same time.
- We have therefore extended our opening hours to maximise the appointment availability
- Our opening hours (subject to change) are :
- **Monday to Thursday 8.30am -1pm 2pm -7pm**
- **Friday 8.30am -1pm 2pm -5pm**
- Appointments for private patients and members of our care plan can be booked at any time during these hours.
- NHS appointments are available at specific time slots (these vary depending on availability and how busy we are)
- Our phone lines switch off at 6.30pm Monday to Thursday to allow reception to organise for the following day. Please call early in the day if you have any emergency needs
- We have 2 reception staff working each day, but often the phone lines can be busy as we have much more information now to give with each call
- If you are finding it hard to get through then please email with a contact number and we will get back to you as soon as possible.
- Please be patient and understanding with our reception team, it can get busy and appointment slots are very limited , they are doing their very best to keep the practice running smoothly

What treatment can you have?

Since reopening we have been limited to providing urgent and emergency dental care under the NHS due to restrictions imposed by our Health Board. On a positive note, it has been possible to offer our full range of treatments independently of the NHS.

Many patients have therefore opted to not delay treatment and have their treatment provided privately. There are many benefits to our patients in providing dental treatment in this way including the use of superior materials, accessing higher quality laboratory work as well as being able to spend longer time with the patient to work with them.

That's said, as of 1st November we are able to provide all forms of treatment that are available under the NHS dental system

This however does **NOT** mean business as usual.

We have very limited appointment availability as each appointment takes longer now. We also need to stagger appointments to minimise patients coming into contact with each other in our waiting room.

You will no doubt appreciate that we also have a significant backlog of NHS treatment to re-start that was scheduled pre lockdown. These need to be prioritised before any new routine treatment can be planned in.

It will take some time to work through these patients - bearing in mind pre lockdown when working at full capacity we were fully booked 4 weeks in advance

We will be contacting people on our lists of outstanding NHS treatment, please be patient with us, as this will take months to clear.

If you had treatment booked pre lockdown and have not heard from us by January please get in touch.

I'm due a
check up –
what do I
do?

- **ADULTS** – We have limited appointments therefore we are not yet able to resume adult NHS check ups as our NHS slots will need to be used for urgent treatment and clearing our backlog of NHS treatment cancelled during Covid19. which will take a considerable time. We will reevaluate the situation in future
- If you have any pain or any dental concerns or any unusual lumps, bumps or ulcers please call and we will arrange to see you for this
- We do have capacity to see adult patients for dental health examinations on a private basis or as part of our practice membership care plan.
- A link to the practice membership care plan leaflet is [here](#)
- **CHILDREN** -We have resumed children's NHS check ups (disclaimer – the photo was pre Covid – masks on at all times for our dentists now!)



Hygienist Services

- We have resumed our hygiene services. The service is now offered independently of the NHS only
- One simple reason for this is that we want our hygiene team to be able to spend an appropriate time with patients working on prevention of gum disease as well as the treatment of it
- Our hygiene services are included in our care plan fees, or can be paid for individually at £50 per extended visit
- The basis of our care plan is to work with you to minimise treatment needs for you in the future by being able to deliver a high-quality prevention based approach. This will allow us to have more time to get to know you, treat your essential dental needs and also find out if there is anything about your smile that you want to change
- If you would like to make an appointment, our hygienists currently work Monday- Wednesday, please call reception and they can arrange your visit



AGP'S – What are they and why do they matter?

- AGP – This is the big buzzword in dentistry at the moment and stands for Aerosol Generating Procedure – basically anything that involves drilling or using the ultrasonic scaler (machine that cleans your teeth with lots of water)
- AGPs are a risk factor for our staff as breathing this aerosol of a patient who may have Covid19 but doesn't yet have symptoms can be very damaging for us.
- We therefore, for our safety have to wear a LOT of PPE (personal protective equipment)
- The two photos below show our normal PPE now for treatment without aerosol (normal surgical mask, visor, gloves, apron), and for an AGP - we need to wear a full covering gown, and a special filtering mask. These are a little uncomfortable, but essential for our staff safety, and have all been tested to ensure fit properly.
- When we complete an AGP, once the appointment is finished, the room has to be left empty for a designated period depending on length of procedure and ventilation (this is called "fallow period"). The room then needs a full cleandown which takes around 25 -30 minutes before it can be used again.
- This downtime of each room after any AGP is why we can only use 3 out of 5 of our treatment rooms at any one time, so that we have a room to move to.



APPOINTMENT INFORMATION



PHONE FOR AN APPOINTMENT

Do not attend the practice unless you have an appointment, our door is closed and entry is by appointment only.

We will ask questions about your Covid status, please answer honestly

CHECK YOUR EMAILS

We will send an email with information and a link to complete forms via our online portal. These forms must be completed prior to appointment to enable us to minimise contact points



ATTEND ALONE WHERE POSSIBLE

We understand if you need assistance or you are the parent or guardian of a child attending

BRING MINIMUM BELONGINGS



BE ON TIME

Please arrive as close to your appointment time as possible. if you arrive early we may have to ask you to wait outside or in your car



WEAR A FACE COVERING (UNLESS EXEMPT)

USE THE HAND SANITISER AT OUR ENTRANCE



DO NOT ATTEND IF YOU HAVE ANY COVID 19 SYMPTOMS, ARE SELF ISOLATING , OR ARE WAITING FOR RESULTS OF A COVID TEST



What will happen at Belhaven if there are stricter lockdown measures in Inverclyde or Scotland?

- From the information we have currently we believe that even with any stricter lockdown measures, dental practices in Scotland will remain open
- We now have plenty supplies of PPE, and have all the protocols necessary to ensure staff and patient safety so we are able to continue with appointments
- We may, as a practice, make a decision on occasion to operate urgent care only depending on local situation and staffing levels – if this were to happen we would contact you if you had a scheduled appointment
- If there were any changes we would contact patients who had appointments scheduled, there is no need to call to check appointments – but please ensure we have up to date details for you
- We fully understand that you may have concerns regarding Covid 19, and we fully understand if you wish to cancel or reschedule any appointment. Please give us as much notice as possible so that we can offer your slot to another patient in need.
- If you have any worries at all about safety measures within the practice, please call and have a chat with one of our staff. We will do our best to make special arrangements where we can if there is anything else we can do to help
- Our practice has always maintained extremely high levels of infection control and with limited patient volume and extra precautions, Belhaven is a very safe environment

A message from Catherine Jones, Practice owner and principal dentist

I would like to personally thank everyone for their patience with our reduced service this year.

As a business owner this has been a challenging year. We have had to make a lot of difficult decisions about how we provide our service – for example stopping NHS hygienist use

. These decisions have all been made with patient care and business viability in the long term at the forefront. We also want to provide the safest environment for our staff and to look after their job security.

We have built up Belhaven for the last 15 years and want to be able to continue this for the next 15 years and beyond.

All of our business decisions are made with patient safety and care as a priority and we are constantly assessing and checking that we are maintaining the highest standards.

It has been an absolute pleasure to return to caring for patients and catching up with patients who feel like old friends.

I would also like to say a huge thankyou to our staff who have had to deal with many uncertainties and have embraced staff training and changes with positivity and enthusiasm. Our stable staff team, most of whom have been with us for over 10 years are what makes Belhaven a special place. We don't just provide dentistry, we really care about our patients.

Many thanks for your support, as always I am happy to answer any queries or concerns via email personally.
Kindest regards,
Catherine