

Northgate Dental Clinic

We hope this letter finds you and your family safe and in good health.

Our community has been through a lot over the last six weeks, and all of us are looking forward to resuming some resemblance of our normal habits and routines. Like most of you, we have stayed home to support our community in making a difference in the containment of COVID-19. And while many things have changed, one thing has remained the same: our commitment to you and your safety.

As dentistry is part of Phase 1 of the Government of Saskatchewan's reopening plan, the Northgate Dental Clinic will be reimplementing dental care services on May 4th. In support of the Reopen Saskatchewan plan, and as required for your safety, the Clinic will put into effect:

- physical distancing for staff and patients,
- frequent enhanced cleaning and disinfection,
- frequent handwashing and sanitizing,
- use of appropriate personal protective equipment as necessary,
- keeping staff who demonstrate or report COVID-19 symptoms out of the workplace,
- and protective measures for vulnerable populations.

The College of Dental Surgeons of Saskatchewan (CDSS) has built a careful and methodical re-opening plan that will allow various dental services and procedures to be carefully phased in over time. Also, our clinic will continue to adhere to dentistry's strict protocols for infection control and treatment recommendations.

Many things have changed, and the Northgate Dental Clinic has changed too. You will notice many changes when it is time for your next appointment. We have made these changes to help protect our patients and staff.

Facility Upgrades: public hand sanitizer station, reception desk shield barrier, operatory rooms enclosed with glass doors, air filtration units, personal protective equipment including lab coats and face shields.

Protocols: mall hallway waiting area, COVID 19 risk screening assessments, thermometer temperature assessment, preprocedural hydrogen peroxide rinse, staff physical distancing measures, aerosol generating procedures (drills) management within a closed operatory room with appropriate settling times and disinfection

Treatment Philosophy: Our initial goal is to minimize aerosol generating procedures (drills) and only for emergency or urgent dental care.

Dental Cleaning Appointments: Unfortunately, at this time, the ultrasonic and polishing instruments are not allowed to be used during cleaning appointments as these instruments do create

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aerosols. Consequently, the dental cleanings will consist of traditional hand scaling, education and advice, and fluoride applications.

Regular Checkup and Cleaning Value: It is still very important to attend regular checkups and cleanings to maintain one's current state of oral health, as well as to identify and address any urgent conditions to prevent the progression and need for possibly more extensive and expensive emergent care in the future.

Appointments: During this initial opening of the province, our ability to see as many patients as normal is limited due to some of the physical distancing and infection control requirements. Consequently, we have opted to extend our working days and include some weekend appointments in our schedule. As well, we are doing our best to prioritize all patients based on varying levels of urgency. Like you, this is all new to us too. Please be patient, as our clinic will learn and develop efficiencies over time to improve our capacity to welcome you all in as timely a manner as possible.

The following are some Pre-Appointment Patient Instructions:

Please self-monitor and reschedule your appointment if you are exhibiting any of the symptoms of COVID 19 – fever, new or changing cough, sore throat, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing.

- Brush teeth prior to appointment.
- Wear a face covering to appointment.
- Bring minimal personal belongings to appointment.
- Try to avoid high frequency touch points in the clinic.
- Expect a “new” environment.

Even challenged with a new and highly infectious agent such as COVID 19, by utilizing a methodical approach, we are confident in our abilities as a profession to manage our patients and keep our dental team and community feeling safe. Further research will ultimately answer the many questions raised about the coronavirus. Until then, the Northgate Dental Clinic dental providers will continue to offer the highest standards in infection control.

As this pandemic continues to evolve, sometimes on a daily basis, the Northgate Dental Clinic continues to monitor reputable sources and agencies for up to date and evidence-based information about best practices to incorporate into our protocols.

We look forward to seeing you again and are happy to answer any questions you may have about the protocols we take to keep you, and every patient, safe in our practice. To make an appointment, please call our office at (306) 775-2737 or visit our website www.northgatedentalclinic.ca

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In the meantime, let's work together to make sure that dental problems stay to a minimum by working extra hard at your day-to-day homecare. Brush, floss, and rinse daily. Although difficult with all of the extra time at home, try to maintain a well-balanced diet and avoid or minimize sugars between meals.

Thank you for being our patient. Thank you for your patience. We value your trust and loyalty. We look forward to welcoming you back.

We have come so far! Please stay at home, social distance, and stay safe.

Sincerely,

Dean Zimmer, Eric Knouse, and the Northgate Dental Clinic Staff