

Grand Haven Family Dentistry

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Dear Patient,

We hope this letter finds you and your family in good health. Our lives have been altered over the last few months, and all of us are looking forward to resuming a sense of “normalcy”. While many things have changed, one thing has remained the same: our commitment to your safety.

Infection control has always been a top priority in our practice, and you may have seen this during your visits to our office. Our infection control processes are made so that when you receive care, it's both safe and comfortable. Our office adheres to infection control recommendations made by the American Dental Association (ADA) and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA). We will monitor the activities of these agencies so that we are up to date on any new rulings or guidance that may be issued. We do this to make sure that our infection control procedures are current and adhere to each agencies' recommendations.

You may see some changes when it comes time for your appointment, in accordance with new recommendations and regulations. We made these changes to help protect our patients and staff. For example:

- In accordance with the guidance from the American Dental Association, our office will communicate with you before your appointment to ask some screening questions and you will be asked those same questions a second time when you are in the office. You will have your temperature and/or oxygen saturation measured upon your arrival to the office before you are allowed to enter or receive treatment. You may be asked to reschedule your appointment if you have a fever or are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19.
- In accordance with the State of Michigan Emergency Order 2020-97, you must wear a facemask upon entering the office.
- We will have you use hand sanitizer or wear disposable gloves when you enter the office.
- You may see that our reception area no longer offers magazines or children's toys and books since these items are difficult to clean and disinfect. In order to practice social distancing, there will be limited seating available in the waiting room. You may also be asked to wait in your vehicle, if able, until we are ready to bring you into the treatment area.
- Appointments will be managed to allow for social distancing between patients. That might mean that you're offered fewer options for scheduling your appointments.
- We will do our best to allow greater time between patients to reduce waiting times for you as well as to reduce the number of patients in the reception area at any one time.
- We will be regularly disinfecting common surfaces to avoid any risk of cross contamination.

Our office has had to make many other changes as well. These will affect you and your loved ones, but these changes are necessary for the health and safety of our patients and staff. These are some of the changes being made:

- Each dentist and staff member will be screened twice daily for any symptoms.
- Staff will be wearing additional personal protective equipment, some of which may make communication more of a challenge. However, we pledge to do our best to answer all of your questions during your appointment and communicate as clearly as possible.
- At this time, only the patient receiving treatment will be allowed in the treatment rooms. That means parents and caregivers will not be allowed to accompany their loved ones during dental treatment. Only translators and service animals are allowed to accompany a patient at this time. Please understand that dentistry involves creating an aerosol and this puts everyone in the immediate area at risk without proper protection equipment, so no exceptions will be made. If a parent, guardian, or caretaker must accompany the patient and would like to wait in the waiting room during treatment, they must also be screened before being able to enter the office.
- Currently, and for the foreseeable future, we are unable to offer nitrous oxide sedation.
- Please know that while we will be as personable as we can, we will not be shaking hands or extending hugs at this time. You will be greeted with a smile from under our masks, and know that these measures are simply for your safety.

Please know that in order to accommodate and adhere to all of the changes required for patient safety there may be longer wait times. We will do our absolute best to stay on schedule as much as possible and appreciate your understanding.

Lastly, and in full transparency, the added requirements of training, personal protective equipment (PPE), and office equipment installation necessary to keep our patients and staff safe is very expensive. We pride ourselves on keeping our fees fair, and are not looking to make a profit off of our additional expenses, but in reality the added cost of this equipment cannot be absorbed in our existing fees. For the foreseeable future, you will see that we are billing separately for this additional equipment.

At this time, our office is still closed and we have not been given a date when dentistry can resume. Dental offices are mandated to be closed by the government. As soon as we know the date that we can re-open, we will be calling patients to start rescheduling appointments.

We look forward to seeing you again and are happy to answer any questions you may have about the steps we take to keep you, and every patient, safe in our practice. To make an appointment, please call our office at 616-844-4400.

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

Sincerely,

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