

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed a lot of things about our daily lives. Now that Montgomery County is opening, BCC Smiles will begin to see patients for non-emergency appointments. The American Dental Association has developed science-based guidance to dentists on extra steps we can take, **in addition to the infection control procedures we've always followed**, to help protect our patients and staff.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is in high demand and will remain such for an indefinite period of time. There is a severe shortage of the raw materials needed to fabricate the masks and gowns that are essential for us to protect ourselves. We are doing everything we can to keep you and our team safe so that we can continue to deliver the same high-quality dentistry you have come to appreciate from us. We are grateful for your understanding, or at least acceptance, of our new (hopefully temporary) **PPE fee of \$20**. This fee will help cover a fraction of the many new safeguards needed to keep patients and staff safe. Unfortunately, dental insurances are not covering these expenses at this time. Therefore, to continue to be here and offer excellent service, we are asking our patients to cover the cost of their own protection. We hope that you will see the value in our efforts and stick with us through this difficult time.

Here's what you can expect at your next appointment.

Before Your Appointment

To help make sure that patients arriving for their appointments are healthy, BCC Smiles will be calling you before your appointment and ask you some questions about your current health.

You will need to limit the number of people you bring to the appointment. That could mean leaving your children at home or allowing older children to go into the office alone while you wait outside during their appointment.

At Your Appointment

Maryland does require people to wear masks in public, so please be sure to wear one to your appointment. When you arrive at BCC Smiles, please call the office - you may be asked to wait outside or in your car until we're ready for you. This will reduce the number of people in the office and reduce the amount of time you're close to other people.

When you enter the office, please have a mask on and hand sanitizer will be available for you to clean your hands. You will then have your temperature taken and recorded. We will also hand you the questionnaire to complete about your current health. Please **KEEP** the pen supplied or bring your own to use or place it into the used pens container.

Inside BCC Smiles, you may notice things people often touch in the waiting room – like toys and magazines – have been removed. Please do your best to maintain the 6ft between you and anyone else.

When you're in the dental chair, you may notice some things look different from the last time you were there. Dr. Lakhani and staff will be using different protective equipment than they've used at previous appointments. This could include different masks, face shields, gowns and goggles. These additional precautions help protect both you and our staff.

BCC Smiles has also added HEPA Air Cleaning Systems in the office. We are also using Hypochlorous Acid (HOCL) throughout the office and in the operatories between each patient. For more information on HOCL, please feel free to check with us.

Once you are seated, we will be checking your blood pressure and your Oxygen level to be recorded. You will also be asked to rinse with a hydrogen peroxide oral rinse to decrease pathogens in your mouth.

After Your Appointment

After your appointment is over, the staff will thoroughly clean the areas where you've been using disinfectants that are effective against the virus that causes COVID-19 to prepare for the next patient. This helps reduce the risk of illness being passed to others.

If you start feeling ill **with the symptoms of COVID-19** within 14 days of your appointment, call the dental office. You may have already been carrying the virus at the time of your appointment, so anyone who came into contact with you during that time could be at risk for getting sick too.

Remember, regular dental visits are an essential part of your oral hygiene routine – and are important for your overall health. Be sure to reschedule your dental checkups once dental practices are able to reopen. Dr. Lakhani will make sure your visit is as safe as possible for everyone involved.