

**Wearing Face Coverings in GP Practices**

The government has stated that patients should continue to wear face coverings when attending NHS services. This is to help keep everyone safe, including patients attending services and the NHS staff caring for those patients.

Our practice is following the guidance set out by national government and local NHS Sheffield CCG infection prevention and control. These are measures that keep patients and NHS staff safe, as they reduce the chance of catching Covid whilst at the health centre.

We understand that there are some circumstances where people may not be able to wear a face covering. Not being able to wear a face covering does not mean we will not treat you, but we may need to take additional safety measures in these circumstances.

Patients that arrive ahead of an appointment in the building who are not able to wear a face covering may, on a case-by-case basis, be asked to wait outside prior to their appointment starting. This is first and foremost to reduce the risk for this person of catching Covid whilst attending the health centre and is in line with British Medical Association recommendations regarding the increased use of outdoor space.

By doing this we keep the patient who is unable to wear a face covering as safe as possible as they will be in the most ventilated environment possible, away from any potential source of Covid infection. Patients are also able to wait in their vehicle in the car park if they wish to and we can contact them as the appointment starts. This will also help to keep other patients and health centre staff as safe as possible.

There are a range of other measures alongside face coverings that help keep patients and NHS staff safe that you will experience at the health centre:

* social distancing measures inside the health centre
* regular hand washing
* using hand sanitiser
* using remote consultations where possible
* screening questions about Covid symptoms when patients arrive
* staff wearing PPE (including face masks)
* all staff having their Covid vaccines

This is not an exhaustive list and may change over time, in line with guidance updates.

Thank you,
The Team at Barnsley Road Surgery