

To Our Valued Patients,

The Team at North Harbor Dentistry, Justine and I, hope that these last few months have found you in good health. It has been our pleasure and honor taking care of those that needed emergency care, or had questions and concerns during these uncertain times. The foundation of our practice is built upon the trust that you have placed in us to monitor and care for your oral health.

As we emerge from these challenging times, we must take what has been learned, and evolve to new higher standards of precaution and safety for our patients and staff. Much like the changes, of what we now call “Universal Precautions”, that medicine and dentistry implemented to adequately treat those with HIV/AIDs and to protect against bloodborne pathogens in the 1980’s, the new universal precautions will encompass greater aerosolized respiratory disease protections.

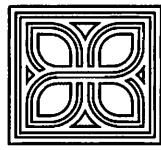
While our office has been closed, Justine and I have been very busy reading, participating in webinars and consulting directly with colleagues in the CDC, Department of Health, OSHA/WISHA, American Dental Association, Academy of General Dentistry, University of Washington Virology, and the University of British Columbia, all working to help craft rational, evidence-based guidelines for restarting dental practices around the country. Some of these changes will become the new standard of care, while some may be relaxed over time. We will always provide you with safe, honest, and evidence based Oral Health Care.

Recommendations are continually changing as data is analyzed and the disease process is better understood, and we are as up-to-date as possible.

To that end, we will be reopening slowly like turning a dial, as Governor Inslee describes, to patients on Tuesday, May 19. Guidelines by the CDC and the WA State Mandate modified on April 27<sup>th</sup> require us to follow rigorous scheduling protocols to ensure the safety and well-being of you, our patients, and the team members at our office.

We ask for your patience. We had to cancel over 1200 appointments, and we know that there is a strong desire to get back in our office as soon as possible. We will eventually, but it will not be as fast paced as we are used to in our office. This benefits everyone. We will have to be very firm in our processes and procedures. They have been well-thought-out and reviewed countless times by Justine and I and our entire team.

We have already begun rescheduling patients on a first-canceled-first-rescheduled basis, which is fair, efficient, and will serve everyone with getting back on track. Our office procedures have temporarily changed and will include the following:

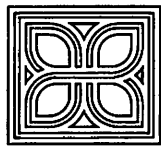


### **Appointments:**

- The number of appointments per day may be limited to a level that will accommodate safe social distancing within the office. The points outlined below will lend clarity to this decision.
- Please wait for our office to call you to reschedule your appointments until June 1st. We have a very accurate and comprehensive list of every appointment canceled, including the day and time and by then, we will have reached out to everyone at least twice. If you have not heard from us by then, please call.
- Emergencies will continue to be defined by definitive criteria. We are here for your health and safety. Please call ahead, Dr. Matt and Justine will discuss your care with you.

### **Visits:**

- When you arrive for your appointment, please stay in your car. Please call or text our office upon your arrival, and a front desk coordinator will provide you instructions for timing to come to the front door.
- Only the patients that are being treated will be allowed to enter the office. The only exception for this will be for very young patients. Of those, only one parent/caregiver may accompany the patient. Absolutely no other family members or friends will be allowed inside.
- Please bring your own mask and wear it to your appointment. If you do not have your own, we will provide one; however, personal protective equipment supplies are dangerously low.
- Your temperature will be taken by staff using a touchless thermometer. If your temp is over 100 degrees F, you will be asked to leave and not return for the specified 14-day self-quarantine requirement.
- A simple questionnaire assessing your contacts, travel, and well-being will be asked of all patients/guardians as well. Any question indicating recent exposure to someone with COVID-19 or having signs and symptoms of the same will be asked to leave, and not return for the specified 14-day self-quarantine requirement.
- Maintain the 6-foot social distancing guidelines when in the office until seated in the treatment chair.
- The tooth-brushing station will be used as a hand-washing/sanitizing station required of every patient before being seated. No tooth-brushing, only hand-washing. Depending on the appointment type that you are scheduled for, you may be asked to rinse for 30 seconds with a 1.5% hydrogen peroxide solution that you will spit into a cup and the assistant will dispose.
- The patient restroom may be closed, so please prepare for that before arrival.
- Patients will be seated at a safe distance in the office to maintain social distancing, which is one of the reasons for limiting the volume in the schedule.
- We ask for understanding while we will try to address all of your treatment needs during your visit



**Social:**

- WE LOVE OUR PATIENTS! We also love to chat with you at your appointment. Please understand that conversations will be significantly reduced to allow for social distancing, running on time, disinfection of treatment chairs and instruments, etc. We are certainly interested in you and what's been going on in your world, but look forward to catching up further at future appointments.
- No food or drink can be brought into the office.

**Team:**

- We will take the temperatures of every team member, including Dr. Matt and Justine, immediately upon arrival at work, and after lunch. Any team member at 100 F or above will go home.
- Every team member will answer the health questionnaire that our patients are required to answer, and will do so every day. If any questions disqualify the team member, they will be sent home following the same procedures we are asking our patients to follow.

**General:**

You will find upon arrival that our furniture has been rearranged. You'll also notice other changes made to ensure the health and well-being of our patients and our team.


We are so grateful for every one of our patients, and this time away has only served to make us even more thankful for each of you. You are the life-force of our practice, and this is why we are taking your safety VERY seriously. We thank you for your patience and understanding. If you have any questions or concerns about your upcoming dental visits, dental care, or the changes that we are making do not hesitate to call.

Even though our masks may be different these days, we promise, we are still smiling and will do everything we can to make the visits to our clinic as comfortable and safe as possible.

In Good Health,



Dr. Matthew J Priess DDS



Dr. Justine J Priess DDS