

The last 6 months has been tough for all of us here in East Gippsland. Ongoing drought then, the terrifying bushfires, and just as we were starting to come to terms with the fallout from that we have all been blindsided by this nasty virus.

During the strict restrictions placed on the population as a whole, and specifically within dentistry, we have been running a skeleton service for the last month or so, only permitted to see dental emergencies. While opening hours have been reduced, we have tried to ensure that all emails and phone calls have been responded to promptly, but we apologise if you've felt neglected at all.

It has been a frustrating time for all of us at the practice, being unable to offer our usual high level of dental care and treatment to everyone, but we are relieved to now be able to welcome everyone back. Although it will be something close to "business as usual", you will probably notice a few new systems and protocols in place, in addition to the already very high standard of infection control implemented in dental surgeries throughout Australia.

One change is that we need to limit the number of people in the building as much as is reasonable. This means that where possible, you should attend your appointments alone, and where not possible (especially with younger children) only one adult should attend with the patient. Of course, if you feel at all unwell please stay at home, give us a call, and reschedule your appointment.

Apart from that, we will insist on everybody using alcohol gel on their hands on arrival and having a mouthrinse when they enter the surgery - please don't be offended by any of this!

Since we have been unable to see patients for regular examinations and routine treatment, there may be a backlog as we initially try to "catch up" with everybody due for their appointments. In anticipation of this, we will now be opening the practice on Fridays, commencing in June. While David and Sue will still be seeing the lion's share of patients, our new dentists Sophia and Steve will be at the practice on those Fridays to increase our capacity and welcome current and new patients alike.

Almost everyone will have been affected financially to some degree by this worldwide crisis, and we realise that many people are having to cut their outgoings. We may be biased, but we believe that oral health is an incredibly important part of overall health and wellbeing. Regular examinations and treatment where required are essential to achieve and maintain healthy teeth and mouths, and ideally shouldn't be delayed.

If you would like to book in for an appointment, please give the reception team a call on 5156 1283. We are now available 8:30am-5pm Monday to Friday. Otherwise we will be in touch when you are due for your regular appointments, or to follow up on any outstanding treatment plans.

Yours sincerely, Drs Sue and David Griffiths, Steve Mace and Sophia Jones, and all the team at Paynesville Dental Centre