



18th August 2020

Angus Walls, Director

Edinburgh Dental Institute
4th Floor Lauriston Building
Lauriston Place
Edinburgh EH3 9HA

COVID-19 Update No 19

Content of this update

- AGP care and fit testing
- Practices who “opt out”
- Fallow times for AGPs
- FFP3 mask expiry

+44 (0)131 536 4975
angus.walls@nhslothian.scot.nhs.uk

Dear Colleagues,

AGP care and fit testing

We have had a number of enquiries about fit testing and AGP care and it seemed easier to write to all with generic responses rather than informing some and not all.

As you will be aware we have been fit testing dentists and nurses for FFP3 masks for about a week now with the initial intention to try to get 1 team in every practice who are able to deliver urgent AGPs using the PPE supplied by the NHS. There are 3 recurring themes in the queries that have been raised subsequently.

Resilience

We do appreciate that dentists and nurses may not all work 5-days per week and both need holidays etc. Once we have achieved the initial target of getting 1 team fit-tested in every practice there will then be further appointments available for fit testing for all practices to support a more resilient workforce to enable all to offer AGPs each day across and team of dentist and nurses in your practice. This will take time so please bear with us as we try to get to a first point of all practices who wish to delivering AGPs to some level.

UDCCs

Referrals for AGPs to UDCCs can still be made in 2 circumstances from those practices where there are fit-tested dental teams

- When the fit-tested team are not available for a specific day then a patient who needs to be seen within 24 hours (SDCEP guidance) can still be referred to the UDCC in the Chalmers Dental Centre using the same telephone numbers / approach as previously
- When a patients clinical care is beyond the competence of the referring practitioner again to Chalmers using the same telephone numbers / approach as previously.

When a patient has a 7-day outcome (SDCEP guidance) please do not refer to the UDCC on the day they present to you, rather make an appointment within the practice for that to be delivered within the necessary time-frame. Each practice will be given sufficient PPE to deliver 25 AGPs per week. The UDCCs at their busiest saw around 150 AGPs per week for the entire population of NHSL and we have never breached a 7-day target in that time. Hosted by:



Tolerance

As those of you who have been delivering AGPs are aware working in enhanced PPE is not a particularly comfortable experience. We have been asked what can a practice do if having been fit-tested the team don't feel comfortable working with enhanced PPE. Essentially there are 2 options, either to nominate others from the practice to undergo fit-testing to support activity in the practice or to opt out of delivery in the practice. That decision has to be one for the dentist and their team.

Practices who "opt-out"

There are a small number of practices who have chosen not to deliver AGPs at this time. We will need to retain some UDCC capacity to support them with AGPs but we will require individuals from those practices to come to work in the UDCCs to support that activity. I will be writing to each practice concerned with details as we get through fit-testing exercise.

Fallow times for AGPs

As you are aware the most recent PCA talked briefly about fallow times after AGPs, stating that rooms with no ventilation (either mechanical or natural) should not be used for AGPs, those with some ventilation should have a fallow time of 60 minutes and that it is possible to reduce the fallow time with increased mechanical ventilation and potentially with other devices (air scrubbers and the like). Issues of ventilation are highly specific to your premises and each individual surgery. NHSL is not in a position to confirm whether or not you can reduce the fallow time to less than 60 minutes irrespective of the technology you are proposing to use because we simply don't have the relevant information about the premises and the ventilation scheme involved, nor do we have the expertise to assess that information. We endorse the CDOs position that rooms without ventilation should not be used for AGPs at this time. Any decision to reduce the fallow time to below 60 minutes is governed by the health and safety at work act and you as employers are responsible for those decisions. Please remember that the fallow time starts when aerosol generation ends, if you don't use the turbine or 3in1 for the last 20 minutes of an appointment for example those 20 minutes are part of the 60 minute fallow time.

FFP3 mask expiry

We have had some queries about expiry dates on eth boxes of FFP3 masks you have been provided by the NHS. All of the masks that have been provided have been re-certified for use in the pandemic, and all are in use throughout NHSL. Every medical device has to have an expiry date but when these masks "hit" that date they can be re-certified for a further period of safe use based on testing and inspection. The attached pdf from the CMO / CNO covers this in detail.

With all my best

Angus Walls