

May 12, 2020
Updated May 13, 2020, May 15, 2020,
May 17, 2020, June 30, 2020, August 4, 2020.

PRACTICE AND APPOINTMENT UPDATES

WE LOVE WELCOMING OUR PATIENTS BACK INTO THE OFFICE!

It has been a pleasure to see so many of our patients in the office since we re-opened on May 13, 2020. The visits have been going very well. Many patients have visited twice or more since May 13th! Their orthodontic care is back on track and moving forward.

We have welcomed many new faces to the practice, too. We are providing orthodontic consultations and we are beginning orthodontic treatment for children, teens, and adults.

If you haven't scheduled to continue your care, we encourage you to do so. Please consider that indefinitely postponing regular orthodontic care is not a good strategy and can be damaging. Read through this document to learn how we are operating in the current environment. We offer all our usual procedures and you can expect to receive the same level of care and attention. It is so easy to get back on our schedule, just give us a call at 301-948-7513!

Please know that we have worked very hard to develop a consistent process that protects our patients and staff. We are following the best guidance and protocols. We are doing our very best to serve you, our patients and families.

- Dr. Tsintolas

YOUR THREE MANDATORY TASKS BEFORE EVERY APPOINTMENT

#1 CONFIRM Your Appointment

Our automated appointment reminder system generates emails and texts at one week and one day before a scheduled appointment. Please read the communications as they walk you through the process to hold the appointment on our schedule. The email has a button to click to confirm the appointment. The text has a code to text back to confirm. A “reply” to an email or text does not confirm the appointment.

Although you will receive multiple email and text appointment reminders, you need confirm just once. If you confirm more than once- it’s not an issue- no worries.

Unconfirmed appointments are subject to removal from our schedule.

If you need to cancel/reschedule, please call 301-948-7513 as soon as possible.

We have limited appointment offerings and high demand. We cannot accommodate the timely rescheduling of patients who fail to show up for appointments.

#2 READ Practice and Appointment Updates [this document]

Please read this document, Practice and Appointment Updates, so you are prepared for your visit. The document is updated as needed so we recommend reviewing the latest version before each appointment.

Please discuss the information with young patients so they, too, are prepared.

#3 SUBMIT the Patient Wellness Screening and Consent

Complete and submit this brief online form **ON** the day before every appointment and do so no later than 3:00 pm. **Dr. Tsintolas personally reviews EVERY form.**

We cannot accept (1) forms received earlier than the day before the appointment and (2) forms received after 3:00 PM **ON** the day before the appointment.

The appointment WILL BE RESCHEDULED if the form is not received **ON** the day before the appointment and prior to that day’s 3:00 pm deadline. Automated email and/or text notifications will alert you of the need to reschedule.

We will not receive your form if you fail to click the SUBMIT button! If nothing happens when you click SUBMIT, one or more responses were unanswered. A successful submission triggers a “Thank You” splash screen and a confirmation email.

For your convenience, the form submission schedule is as follows:

- Monday visit: submit **ON** the day before the visit- **ON** Sunday- no later than 3:00 pm **ON** Sunday.
- Tuesday visit: submit **ON** the day before the visit- **ON** Monday- no later than 3:00 pm **ON** Monday.
- Wednesday visit: submit **ON** the day before the visit- **ON** Tuesday- no later than 3:00 pm **ON** Tuesday
- Thursday visit: submit **ON** the day before the visit- **ON** Wednesday- no later than 3:00 pm **ON** Wednesday.

MORE ABOUT THE PATIENT WELLNESS SCREENING AND CONSENT

The Patient Wellness Screening and Consent is an online form required of ALL patients for EVERY appointment.

Screening ALL patients for EVERY appointment is a big job. We sincerely appreciate your assistance- please be proactive and submit the Patient Wellness Screening and Consent on the day before the appointment and no later than the 3:00 PM deadline.

Do you need a reminder to submit the form? We include a reminder and the online form link in the appointment emails and texts that are sent at one week and one day before scheduled appointments.

If you cannot locate the link to the Patient Wellness Screening and Consent- no worries! Just go to our website, DrTOrthodontics.com and look for the dropdown message to the COVID-19 page.

VISITOR WELLNESS SCREENING AND CONSENT

We are limiting the number of people inside the office for the safety of patients and staff. Parents/guardians are not permitted in the office. [See the additional information later in the document.]

That said, there are a few instances when ONE parent/guardian must join the patient for one or more limited intervals during the patient's visit. At our discretion, we invite the parent/guardian into the office. Generally, a parent/guardian joins the patient at the consultation and at other procedures early in the treatment process.

We screen ALL PARENTS/GUARDIANS, just as we screen ALL PATIENTS. Our office provides parents/guardians with a link to the online VISITOR Wellness Screening and Consent on an as needed basis. The VISITOR Wellness Screening and Consent and the PATIENT Wellness Screening and Consent are NOT the same form and are NOT interchangeable.

The VISITOR Wellness Screening and Consent shares the same submission window as the PATIENT Wellness Screening and Consent. Both online forms must be submitted ON the day before the appointment and no later than 3:00 PM that day. **Again, we sincerely appreciate your assistance- please be proactive and submit the VISITOR Wellness Screening and Consent ON the day before the appointment and no later than the 3:00 PM deadline.**

CHECKLIST BEFORE TRAVELING TO THE OFFICE

#1 Brush and floss AT HOME

Our toothbrushing station is CLOSED until further notice.

Arrive to your appointment with clean teeth.

We don't want to reschedule your visit because we can't see your teeth!

2 Adults should bring a pen to all appointments

3 Be prepared for a temperature screening

A normal temperature is required for entry into the office.

External factors can alter a patient's temperature. Within 30 minutes of your arrival, **PLEASE DO NOT:**

- consume hot or cold food and drinks
- sit in a hot or cold vehicle [summer is here- do not overheat]
- exercise, bathe, or shower

#4 Bring your face mask and wear it properly over the NOSE and MOUTH

No face mask? No admittance to the office.

We are conserving our valuable personal protective equipment. We do not have the inventory to supply patients with face masks.

#5 Get ready for our fabulous fashion

Clinical staff are totally accessorized with face mask, safety glasses, face shield, disposable gown, disposable sleeve covers, and gloves.

Front desk staff wear face masks, work behind clear barriers, and sport gloves as needed.

Yes, it's still us under all these layers- and we are smiling!

Prepare younger patients for our new look.

We are wearing extra layers so you may find the office cooler than usual. Patients may wish to dress for the office climate.

YOUR ARRIVAL AT THE OFFICE

DO NOT WALK INTO OUR OFFICE! Read on for the new arrival flow.

When you arrive at our parking lot, please park and remain in your vehicle.

Call the office from your vehicle to announce your arrival and check-in by phone: 301-948-7513

Please remain in your vehicle- our waiting room is CLOSED. Your vehicle is our new waiting room.

Please don't forget- summer is here. Sitting in a hot vehicle increases body temperature. We are screening patients for elevated temperature immediately upon stepping into our office. Please help us by keeping cool so we are not forced to reschedule the appointment.

When the patient's clinical chair is ready, we will call you and ask the patient to walk into the building and enter our office. Parents may walk a child into the building and to our front door, but parents may not enter the office.

We are minimizing patient exposure to extraneous people. We are admitting only patients into the office.

Before entering the office, the patient's face mask must be properly in place. The mask must cover the NOSE and MOUTH.

WHAT HAPPENS INSIDE THE OFFICE?

The patient walks through our door, takes two steps, and stops at the table.

One of our lovely clinical staff will greet the patient at the table.

Alexandra or Gina will remind the patient to leave their face mask in place until we direct the patient to remove it.

A squirt of hand sanitizer will be dispensed into the patient's hands.

Alexandra or Gina will take the patient's temperature with a no-touch infrared forehead thermometer.

Patients with a normal temperature will be escorted to a clinical chair.

Dr. Tsintolas will be waiting and happy to see his patients. He is so ready to provide the same great care you know and expect.

When treatment is ready to begin, Dr. Tsintolas, Alexandra, or Gina will request the patient remove his/her mask and hold onto it.

The clinical team is dedicated to getting our patients' treatment programs back on track. Thereafter, we manage progress through to treatment completion! Hooray!

Parents may request a video conference through the Patient Wellness Screening and Consent. Dr. Tsintolas initiates a video conference before dismissing the patient. Parents- be on the lookout for Dr. Tsintolas' text inviting you to join him via a secure connection!

We will instruct the patient to replace his/her mask when the appointment is over.

We will escort children to the office door and the child will exit the office. We recommend parents meet their child in the hallway just outside our office door. Parents should call the office at their convenience to schedule the next appointment and for assistance with other administrative tasks.

Adult patients will be escorted to the front desk. Kim and Patty are available to schedule the next appointment before the patient exits the office.

WHAT ARE PARENTS DOING DURING THE APPOINTMENT?

Parents.... please remain in the parking lot while your child is inside the office.

When the appointment is complete, all children must exit the office and reunite with a parent. We recommend parents meet their child in the hallway just outside our office door.

Please do not leave to run errands. Your child cannot remain inside our office and wait for your return... remember our waiting room is CLOSED.

We cannot monitor your child; our focus is patient care and our new routine.

Parents do not have entry into the office, but we don't want parents to feel left out! The Patient Wellness Screening and Consent allows a parent to request a video conference for a patient under 18 years of age. Dr. Tsintolas can video conference with the parent waiting in the car or a parent at work or at home. When the appointment is finishing up, Dr. Tsintolas will text a link to the parent cell phone. Please accept his invitation for a secure video chat. Your questions will be answered and you will receive an update on treatment! WOW- stay connected!

WHAT ARE WE DOING IN ADDITION TO OUR USUAL PROTOCOLS?

In addition to our usual protocols...

We are sanitizing surfaces throughout the office frequently.

We are spacing appointments so we have time to clean and prepare for the next patient.

We physically distance patients by more than 6 feet. One empty clinical chair separates patients.

We reduced the number of people inside the office and we closed the waiting room.

We consistently screen ALL patients on the day before EVERY appointment with an online questionnaire to uncover risk factors. If there is a concern about any response, Dr. Tsintolas calls the parent/patient to discuss.

We screen all patients for elevated temperature.

Staff wears additional protective gear appropriate to their duties in the office.

Everyone in the office wears a mask- staff and patients. Patients are mask-less only while receiving care.

We consistently screen all staff twice a day for a fever and symptoms.

- Staff must report if they are not feeling well or if someone is sick at home.
- A staff member with a temperature, symptoms, or at risk will not be permitted inside the office.
- Compromised staff may not return to work until cleared by a physician.

I DON'T HAVE THE TECHNOLOGY TO FOLLOW THIS PLAN

Please let us know. We will find a workaround.

QUESTIONS?

Call us! 301-948-7513

DR. TSINTOLAS ANSWERS FAQs

Dr. Tsintolas, how committed are you to following these protocols?

I am 100% committed. We are not faltering, slacking, or making exceptions. I understand that we have established some hard lines and rules, but we will continue to follow these protocols until best practices dictate we can ease up. I want patients and parents to feel confident that we are consistent in our commitment to protect the health and safety of patients and staff.

I just completed the Patient Wellness Screening and Consent for last week's visit. Dr. Tsintolas, I need to complete it AGAIN for tomorrow's visit? Really?

YES. A person's COVID-19 risk and exposure changes over time. The screening form submitted last week is of no use for tomorrow's visit. This is why we are so strict to accept the screening form only **ON** the day before EVERY appointment. I want the freshest information available to make the best risk assessments. I personally review every form and I call if I have any questions.

As a parent, I don't feel connected to my child's orthodontic care in a COVID world.

No worries! I offer all parents the option to video conference with me at the end of a child's appointment. It's a perfect way to catch up, have questions answered, and find out how treatment is progressing. In addition, and as always, you are invited to call 301-948-7513 any time and I will make myself available to discuss your child's care.

All these COVID-19 changes to orthodontic visits are a total pain, Dr. Tsintolas. How long must I endure this agony?

I understand that we are asking much more of our patients and families. However, I am following best practices. My top priority is the safety of patients and staff. It's no picnic for us, either. Living in a COVID-19 world is much more work distributed among the same number of staff. I constantly monitor events and when I can lift restrictions, I will be very happy to do so. Nothing would be nicer than to return to the way things used to be!