



FOREST DENTAL

Fees Policy

Why we have this policy

A practice policy will help to establish a formal protocol about when to require payment from patients, the payment methods available at the practice and how to deal with bad debts; it should be understood and followed by all staff.

Introduction

We are committed to ensuring that patients are given sufficient information about the costs associated with their care to allow them to make informed decisions.

Ensuring the prompt collection of fees is crucial to maintaining cash flow and keeping the practice operational. All members of the dental team are responsible for ensuring that patients are fully informed about the fees that they are likely to pay and when those payments will be due.

This policy describes the practice procedure for advising patients of the fees payable for their dental care and for collecting payments.

Information on fees

- We commit to providing full information about costs to patients at every stage of their care.
- Information about fees is displayed in the waiting room. A copy of the information is available on request.
- Information on patient charges and an indicative price list are provided to new patients via the practice welcome email. The practice welcome email describes how patients can pay for their care.

Estimates and bills

- Before any treatment is undertaken, the options available and the associated costs are explained in full to the patient in a way that the patient understands.
- A written treatment plan and estimate of the costs are provided for all dental treatment.
- Patients are always provided with an itemised bill for their treatment. The patient's record should include details of any fees incurred and payments made; it should be checked at each visit and should include details of any outstanding amounts.

Payments

- The practice accepts cash or credit/debit cards (except for Amex) including Apple/Android pay. We do not accept payment by cheque. The practice does not currently offer finance plans. Credit/debit card payments are processed by Clover Merchant Services.
- Our normal policy is to request new patients pay a deposit prior to their initial appointment and pay the balance on completion.
- Whenever a payment is taken, the patient must be offered a full itemised and dated receipt.
- If a patient offers to pay part of the full cost, the part payment should be accepted but the patient must be reminded that the amount paid is not accepted as full-and-final settlement.
- The patient should be offered a statement showing the original invoice amount and date, the date and amount of the part-payment, and the amount still outstanding.

- Payment is made at the end of each appointment, for the work you have had carried out, and we'll only ever ask for payment 'up front' when we need to send work to be made at the laboratory. For planned treatment appointments, we may request that you leave a £100 deposit towards the cost of your treatment.

- NHS patients will be charged in accordance with the NHS dental charges regulations (see <http://www.nhs.uk/chq/Pages/1781.aspx?CategoryID=74>). Exempt patients will be required to sign NHS forms and provide evidence that they are exempt.

Outstanding payments

- A regular check of the treatments provided against the payments received is undertaken by and reminders sent to patients who have missed payments.

- If no payment is received within four weeks, a reminder will be sent inviting the patient to contact the practice regarding payment options.

- If, following the second reminder, no payment is received, a final reminder letter will be sent, and the patient advised that further failure to make a payment may result in the practice instructing a debt collection agency or taking legal proceedings. Details of the agency will be provided to ensure that the patient knows who may contact them at a later date.

- If, following the final reminder, no payment is received, the practice manager will consider how to progress the matter. Action may include the engagement of a reputable debt collection agency or formal legal action. In extreme circumstances and at the sole discretion of the practice owner and practice manager the debt may be written off.

- The patient will be informed that, for the purposes of collecting the debt, their details may be passed to a third party.

Reviewed: 27/05/2023