



## FACE MASK WEARING POLICY

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1	January 2022	Jo Osborn	David Marshall	

Public Health England's infection prevention control guidance advises that patients and visitors across all healthcare settings should wear a face covering, this is in addition to social distancing, hand hygiene for staff, patients, and visitors in both clinical and non-clinical areas to further reduce the risk of transmission.

The safety of both our staff and our patients is of paramount importance and face coverings or face masks should be worn by patients in a healthcare setting, in line with government guidance. Where patients are not able to wear masks, the practice will take all reasonable steps to identify practical working solutions with the least risk to all involved.

To ensure the safety of patients and staff if a patient is not able to wear a mask, we consider alternative ways of seeing the patient:

- Where feasible we consult with the patient remotely
- Rearrange appointments to a time that would minimise exposure and risk for other patients
- See the patient outside
- Socially distance effectively in a room, using the biggest room available to see the patient
- Ask the patient if they would accept wearing a face shield or scarf if not a mask
- Asking the patient if they face in a different direction especially for anything that involves close contact. There is evidence that direct face to face, as in standing opposite each other, is the highest exposure
- Maximise ventilation of the space where they are seen
- Booking the appointment at the end of the day

We appreciate that altering some of these factors may result in an appointment that is less convenient for the patient, but this needs to be balanced against the increased risks to staff and other patients that are associated with not wearing a mask.

It remains strict policy at New Court Surgery to insist on mask wearing. We do not have legal sanction to so insist. However, we will have to balance the risk of not seeing a patient and their medical problem against the risk of contagion. Therefore, if a patient has a new medical problem to discuss, they will have to book a telephone consultation first to ascertain the relative risk to the fellow patients and staff, against the risk of the patient's potential medical diagnosis being delayed. If we do need to see you a patient person, and they continue to insist on not wearing a mask, then we will have to see the patient in our isolation area where risk of contamination to the rest of the surgery is reduced.

[Infection prevention and control for seasonal respiratory infections in health and care settings \(including SARS-CoV-2\) for winter 2021 to 2022 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/guidance/infection-prevention-and-control-for-seasonal-respiratory-infections-in-health-and-care-settings-including-sars-cov-2-for-winter-2021-to-2022)

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