

Direct Access Protocol and Consent

Consent form to see a dental hygienist under Direct Access:

Wedgwood House Dental Practice has introduced the following direct access arrangements that allow patients to see a dental care professional (DCP) without a prescription from a dentist. These arrangements permitted by General Dental Council (GDC) in May 2013 currently apply to private patients only.

The following team members provide services under direct access*:

- Mrs Gil Le Grys – Hygienist provides dental hygiene services.

If you are thinking of seeing dental hygienist, without seeing the dentist for examination (or have not seen your dentist within recommended recall examination time frame, up to 24 months), this process is called Direct Access.

Here are few things you may wish to know before you see a hygienist on Direct Access.

Role of a Dental Hygienist

A dental hygienist's main duty is to prevent and treat gum disease with scaling, polishing and root care to remove hard deposits and plaque. Hygienists can also apply medications and solutions to your mouth and gums. The hygienist will demonstrate correct flossing and brushing techniques as well as other oral hygiene techniques according to your personal requirements. Dietary advice and other information such as how to give up smoking is also provided as needed. The research has shown that patients who regularly visit the hygienist suffer from less dental problems in the long term.

In relation to gums, the hygienist can advise you on the progression of gum disease, but more advanced conditions may need to be assessed by a dentist, and the hygienist then continues treatment under the prescription of the dentist.

A Direct Access visit to the hygienist is not a substitute for full dental examinations. We recommend you visit your dentist or dental therapist whatever time frame you were recommended for routine dental examinations.

There is no set frequency for hygiene treatments as every patient has different needs. Recall frequencies are tailored to your personal requirements. For example in the case of advanced gum disease you may need a course of treatment consisting of four visits over a month, followed by one visit a month for a year. Alternatively, if you have a healthy mouth, the recommended recall period could be yearly. The hygienist will suggest a hygiene treatment frequency that best suits your needs, and your dentist or dental therapist will confirm it at the check-up.

Excluded from direct access by hygienists are:

- Prescribing of medicines, antibiotics and radiographs, these are done under prescription of a dentist; although local anaesthetics and fluoride supplements can be prescribed by hygienists under a Patient Group Directive (PGD) from the practice principal.
- Prescribing of tooth-whitening treatments, these require a prescription from a dentist following face-to-face examination.
- Diagnosing or giving the prognosis (likely outcome) of diseases such as decaying and broken teeth etc.

- Providing a full oral examination and assessment. This must be booked separately with a dentist or dental therapist.
- Treating toothache: it is unusual for gum issues to cause toothache, but certain conditions may be alleviated by gum treatment, for example wisdom tooth gum pain.

Our website provides information on the dental services carried out at Wedgwood House, plus it has biographies of all our dental team.

Additional Direct Access details of what a dental hygienist can do can be found on the GDC website <https://www.gdc-uk.org/standards-guidance/standards-and-guidance/direct-access>

Referrals

If/when the dental hygienist identifies any areas of concerns or cannot provide treatment within their scope of practice, they may refer you to a dentist or dental therapist (as appropriate).

There are very rare circumstances when a hygienist cannot start a treatment, and before they are prepared to continue, insist that a dentist assesses you. These may relate to your medical history and general health, or the condition of your mouth, which gives them concern.

Some treatments such as teeth whitening, or if you need a fluoride toothpaste prescription, then you will need to see the dentist and, in some cases had dental examination within the last year.

Where do we refer our Direct Access patients?

For any diagnosis or treatment which is outside of the scope of practice of a dental hygienist (or a dental therapist), you will be referred to one of our in-house dentists if you are already registered with a dentist at WHDP. However, if you have a dentist outside of this practice or if you prefer to see any other dentist, your dental hygienist will write a report of findings and you may take this to the dentist of your choice.

For more complex cases where urgent specialist attention is required, we may need to refer you to a Dental Hospital or to private specialist clinic. Both of the referrals can only be made after we have your written permission.

Consent

I have read and understand the limitations of direct access to a dental hygienist and agree to be treated under the direct access arrangements.

I understand that the hygienist is not responsible for the overall health of my mouth and that regular visits to a dentist/dental therapist are still required.

I understand I may be referred to dentist/dental therapist/specialist for further care if needed.

Signed:

Date:

Name in capital letters: