



Patient Information Leaflet
Dental Care by
Students
Cork University Dental
School & Hospital



This leaflet has been designed to explain what dental care by on student clinics involves and contains answers to many frequently asked questions. If you have any other questions that the leaflet does not answer, or if you would like further information, please ask us.

Cork University Dental School and Hospital (CUDSH) is part of University College Cork and trains students to be dentists, dental hygienists and dental nurses. As part of their training, these students provide care to patients. This care is always fully supervised by qualified staff. We very much appreciate your support in providing this training and have developed this information sheet to explain what you can expect from dental care with our students. This information sheet also outlines what level of commitment we need from you as a patient, to successfully complete your treatment.

Suitability for treatment

Not all patients are suitable for care by dental students. If you are interested in having treatment on the student clinic, we will arrange to see you and assess you. This assessment will be carried out by a student under supervision. We will then be able to tell you whether some, all, or none of your care can be provided by a student. This decision depends upon whether:

- the type and complexity of treatment that you need is appropriate for a student
- the waiting list is open and we can arrange to treat you before too long
- you have availability and flexibility to attend (see below)

If we are not able to arrange your care on the student clinic, we will fully explain our reasons.

There are various reasons why we may not be able to offer you treatment at CUDSH. It is important to understand that your care needs may change after treatment has begun and we may not be able to continue your care. Sometimes your treatment may become too complex for a student clinic or we may not be able to accommodate certain medical needs. If this is the case, we might suggest that you seek treatment with a special care dentistry service and may refer you if necessary. Where we can, we will try to match patients whose first language is not English or Irish with a student or staff member who can communicate with them. It may be necessary for you to bring someone who can help you with communication. However, it might be better for you to consider finding a local dentist who speaks your preferred language.

The arrangements for treatment on a student clinic are different from a normal dental practice so it is very important that you understand the points below.

Your time

Dental students work more slowly than qualified dentists and their work must be checked very regularly by their supervisors. There are also times during the year when students are on holidays or are doing exams. They may be away for several weeks at a time. This means that your treatment will take longer than in a normal dental practice. There will be more appointments and each appointment will last longer. *For instance, a qualified dentist might complete a root canal treatment on a back tooth in 1 or 2 visits (between 2 and 3 hours in total). It might take a student between 4 and 6 visits to do the same treatment, with each visit lasting 3 hours.*

Your availability

Because treatment time is longer with dental students, it is very important that you have plenty of time to attend your appointment. You also need to be flexible about the days and times when you can attend. Generally, your visits will be on the same day/time each week, so that the same student and supervising dentist look after you all the way through. If this would be difficult for you, it may be better for you to have treatment outside of the Dental School.

Your commitment

Our students are very dependent on your commitment to them. Please remember to contact us as early as possible if you need to change your appointment and do your best to avoid cancelling on the day of your visit. Late cancellations affect training for our students and mean that we cannot deliver care to other patients. If you fail to attend an appointment without letting us know in advance, we will not automatically offer you another appointment. Our contact details are included in this leaflet, and on your appointment card or letter.

Parking near CUDSH is very difficult and you will need to take this into account when you are planning your journey. If you are more than 20 minutes late for your appointment it might not be possible to have your treatment that day.

Who will treat me?

You will be treated by one of our undergraduate students and they may be assisted by a second student. Your care plan, as well as every stage of your treatment, will be reviewed and agreed by one of our qualified staff dentists. Some patients who are referred to CUDSH may see a consultant at their first appointment to assess the complexity of care needed and decide whether they are suitable for care on the student clinic. If you are then treated on the student clinic it may not be the same consultant or dentist who oversees your care.

Will I always be treated by the same student?

Where possible, all your treatment will be provided by the same student. However, there are situations where your care may be transferred to a different student. For example, this might happen if your treatment needs a student with more experience, or if your student must move elsewhere. If you are transferred to another student then we will explain the reasons for this and the transfer will be overseen by a qualified dentist.

What happens if my student graduates before my treatment is finished?

If the student treating you reaches the end of their training before your treatment is finished, you will be transferred to another student. If your original treatment has been completed but you then require further treatment, you can apply again for the new treatment to be assessed in the Treatment Planning Clinic. If the treatment is suitable, you will be placed back on the waiting list.

What happens if my treatment is not suitable for a student?

Dental students rely on your support as treating patients gives them the range of experience they need. Sometimes your treatment will unexpectedly become too complicated for students to provide. If this happens, you may be asked to get your future treatment at an external dental practice rather than at this hospital. There is very limited capacity for staff to take over care of patients who have attended students but where treatment has become too complicated or has not been successful. If your care is transferred to a staff member, then you will be charged full fees at the staff rate.

What happens if I have an emergency?

Students are not always in the clinics so they may not be able to see you immediately if you develop a dental problem. During the school year, if you have a problem and your student cannot see you as soon as necessary, they may book you into our emergency clinic where other students and staff will see you. You will then return to your own student for the rest of your care. During the school holidays, emergencies will be seen and cared for by a staff member.

What happens when my treatment is finished?

Once your treatment is finished you will be discharged from CUDSH. You should get your regular check-ups and care with a local dentist. If you have a problem with your treatment within 1 year then CUDSH will look after you without charge as long as you have followed any advice that we gave you; for example, good oral hygiene and dietary advice. After the first year there will be a charge to treat any problems.

Contact us:

If you have any queries about your appointment or the waiting list you have been placed on, please contact the dental undergraduate appointments centre: Telephone: 021-490-1100 Email: dental@ucc.ie

If you have any problems or concerns about your treatment, please contact the Hospital and School Manager, Ground Floor, Cork University Dental School & Hospital Telephone: 021-490-1114