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Hygiene Recare SYSTEM

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▼ **HEALTHY RE CARE EQUALS A HEALTHY PRACTICE**

A successful dental hygiene department is the backbone of a successful dental practice. Establishing an effective recare system not only keeps patients in the schedule, but it will also help them to attain their highest level of oral health. Beyond guaranteeing that patients receive the maintenance care that they need, every practice wants to keep hygiene teams and doctors productive, and a solid recare system will help to do this!

▼ **CREATE VALUE**

A key thing to remember is that the effectiveness of your recare system relies not only on scheduling and follow up but with the sense of the value that you and your team build. A patient will be more likely to return to your practice for their recare appointments if they understand the value of maintaining their oral health and the services you provide. Educate patients during every appointment and with each interaction, utilizing all of the tools at your disposal such as videos, x rays, and intraoral cameras. The team should always be prepared to answer any questions patients have about their oral health and your treatment recommendations.

▼ **PRE-APPOINT**

With value solidly in place, the actual recare process begins by making every attempt to schedule patients for their next appointment before they leave your office. Keeping patients on the schedule is always easier than tracking them down to get them back in the schedule. Set a goal to pre-appoint each of your patients before they walk out your door, and always make this a priority! Pay attention to this important KPI and report on it frequently. According to Dental Intel Benchmarks, top performing teams pre-appoint 90% of their hygiene patients. Set a goal to exceed this number, and watch those hygiene numbers climb!

▼ **CONFIRM**

Once you have patients on the schedule, help them keep those appointments! Many offices already have programs that will help take care of confirmations via email or text, but make sure that you have a system in place to contact those patients that have not auto confirmed, or just prefer a good old fashioned phone call.

Utilization of your practice management or data tracking software will be the next key in establishing solid recare policies. As you work these lists, it's key to reach as many patients as possible that have fallen off of the schedule, and by running a series of reports that cover different time frames, the team can capture as many of those patients as possible. Of course, always begin with a report telling you who is currently due in the office, but couple that with a list of those folks that have fallen through the cracks! The following reports/lists ensure that you are covering all of your bases, and will be the cornerstone of this system. They should be run monthly, at the beginning of each month:

>	CURRENT RECALL PATIENTS	15 MONTHS PAST DUE
>	30 DAYS PAST DUE	16 MONTHS PAST DUE
>	60 DAYS PAST DUE	17 MONTHS PAST DUE
>	90 DAYS PAST DUE	18 MONTHS PAST DUE

> A single individual should take the lead in running, and working these reports on a consistent basis: Consider utilizing the following monthly schedule to ensure that you are contacting all of the patients in your system.

Week 1	>	Contact currently due patients and 15 months overdue
Week 2	>	Contact 30 days overdue and 16 months overdue
Week 3	>	Contact 60 days overdue and 17 months overdue
Week 4	>	Contact 90 days overdue and 18 months overdue

> Make this a team effort and identify other team members that will be responsible for working these reports during their open or down time.



BELOW ARE SOME BEST PRACTICES THAT HELP KEEP THIS SYSTEM RUNNING STRONG.

- ▶ To be effective, set aside time each week to commit to working this report. Consider a dedicated "Hour of Power" each week to allow for uninterrupted time to work the recall system.
- ▶ Pre-schedule your appointments. It's easier to keep patients in the schedule this way.
- ▶ Don't chase down C-patients.
- ▶ Many automated and data analysis systems such as Dental Intel, Weave, and Lighthouse can assist with your hygiene recall system. Reach out to their support teams for help getting them up and running. These tools are rarely used to their fullest potential!
- ▶ Create some urgency if you are leaving a message. This once again reinforces the value of your services, helping patients feel like their appointment is important.
- ▶ Be confident! When talking to patients or leaving messages, utilize verbiage that leads them towards scheduling with confidence. This creates value and gives the patient the sense that you know what is in their best interest.
- ▶ In order for a recare system to work, you must first ensure that all patients have the proper recall information in your software, otherwise, the reports that you run will not be accurate. Be sure to check and update this number if needed at every visit.
- ▶ Don't be tied to only one method of communication. While phone calls will be good for some, texting or email may be best for others.
- ▶ When pre-appointing, let your patients know that they will receive a courtesy reminder from you prior to the appointment, but that you do consider all appointments confirmed at the time they are scheduled.



VERBIAGE AND SCRIPTING IDEAS:

- ▶ Patients are often times more likely to return a message if they believe that its genesis was the Doctor. If leaving a message, the following basic verbiage may be helpful, "Hello Mr. Patient, this is Jenni, Dr. Smiles wanted me to give you a call about your last appointment, please return the call at 555-5555. Thanks, and have a great day."
- ▶ All team members will be responsible for communicating the importance of recare to patients. The value of this service can be conveyed by removing the word "cleaning" from your vocabulary. This is never "just a cleaning," but rather an "Important visit in which your team will scale, polish, and evaluate the overall oral health of the patient."
- ▶ Stop making *confirmation* calls. Instead, start *reminding* patients of the time that they already have reserved on your schedule. If you are calling to confirm, it communicates that the time wasn't already set in the schedule, and thus patients feel it is ok to change. Some good basic verbiage here is, "Hello, Mrs. Patient, this is Jenni from Awesome Smiles. I wanted to remind you of your reserved appointment with us on Tuesday at 11:00 am, we look forward to seeing you then!"