



## The End of The Appointment, Patient Dismissal

Patient retention is increased and the value of today's experience is enhanced when patients know what has occurred at today's appointment and what to expect next. This is done at the end of the appointment with the patient dismissal.

### **Our Goal:**

1. Instill appreciation in the patient for today's dentistry.
2. Set expectations to encourage people to keep their continuing care and other follow up appointments.

The patient dismissal provides the service of communicating what was accomplished today and what to expect as a result of the treatment, and the purpose for their next appointment.

The process should occur at the end of both the hygiene and operative visit.

### **Please see this as an opportunity to:**

1. Communicate facts
2. Develop Trust
3. Enhance the patient's perception of the teams interest and caring.

Patients who feel that quality time is spent on their behalf will be eager to refer their friends and relatives to you.

### **The Process**

This process is performed by the chairside assistant at the end of the restorative appointment and by the hygienist at the end of the hygiene appointment. It will take only a few minutes but is highly effective in building quality relationships.

**Step 1:** The hygienist or dentist completes the procedure that was scheduled for today.

**Step 2:** Place the patient in an upright position in the dental chair with the protective

napkin still in place. This acts as a psychological “seat belt” when coupled with the statement of expectation (next).

**Step 3:** The team member sits in the dentist’s chair and faces the patient. Good eye contact is important. This creates a professional tone for the dismissal.

**Step 4:** The dismissing team member verbally prepares the patient by using a benefit statement:

*Mr. Jones, so that I can answer any questions you may have and let you know what was done today.....*

*I’m going to spend a few minutes with you reviewing your treatment before I escort you to the appointment area.*

**Step 5:** Tell the patient what happened today:

*Mr. Jones, during your periodontal screening, I found some initial signs of periodontal infection on your upper right side. I took a full mouth series of x-rays to determine if the supporting structures such as the bone are affected at this point.*

**Step 6:** Tell the patient what kinds of symptoms, discomfort and post operative care to expect.

*You may experience some slight discomfort after a procedure such as what we did today. You may wish to rinse with 1/4 teaspoon of salt in 8 ounces of warm water three times today to help reduce any soreness you might feel.*

Give out any printed material that’s appropriate at this time.

**Step 7:** If the patient needs another appointment, now is the time to sell the patient on the time or day that you want to see them. This should be the day that this procedure fits in to your goal scheduling system so that your productivity is maintained. The appointment that you are to mention to the patient should have been discussed at the morning huddle.

*Mr. Jones, the x-rays indicate that the bone has not yet been severely affected by the initial periodontal disease. In order to reverse the disease process before it worsens and begins to affect the supporting structures, we need to see you as soon as possible to begin a sequence of root planing. because of the nature of the procedure, it is important that I see you for a morning appointment in a week to 10 days; that’s why our appointment coordinator will be scheduling you for a morning appointment when we go out to the front desk.*

**IF THIS INFORMATION COMES FROM THE CLINICAL TEAM, IT IS MUCH**

## MORE ACCEPTED BY THE PATIENT.

The team member doing the dismissal must adhere to the appointment guidelines which were communicated at the morning huddle.

**Step 8:** For you to motivate the patient to return at a specific time or day, they must know why its important to return. This reason will be more compelling if its directly tied to the patients hot buttons. Give the most important reasons to return with a benefit statement and tie it in with the emotional motivator or concern.

*(Benefit) Mr. Jones, you spoke with me about how important it is for you to keep your teeth and not end up like your father who had dentures. You are already on the road because you are here today. Should this treatment be delayed, I'm concerned that the infection will progress and cause damage to the bone that supports your teeth.*

*(Procedure)... Because of this it will be very important that you keep your next appointment with us. The root planing will allow us to remove the bacteria that is causing the infection. SO that you are comfortable, we will be anesthetizing the area on the upper right. I will be focusing on that area during the root planing and I will show you some new techniques to help you keep that area clean.*

*(Feature Statement) .... Periodontal disease advances very quickly. Catching this disease early and reversing it quickly gives you an excellent prognosis for having your mouth returned to it's healthy state.*

**Step 9:** You will enhance your position if you inform the patient who they will see next time. It's a courtesy and is one more step to assure that they understand the scope of their visit.

*Mr. Jones, do you have any other questions?.....Now that we've finished, I'm going to take you to Judy, our appointment coordinator. She will schedule that morning appointment for you in the next 7 to 10 days.*

**Step 10:** Be sure to give the patient time to ask questions. Doing this while the patient is seated communicates how serious you are about addressing his needs. Also, it gives the patient an opportunity to reveal concerns that could prevent him from returning or for paying for it later. You should discover all objections now so that you can discuss them in privacy. This precludes the patient from having lengthy conversations at the front desk where there will be interruptions and lack of privacy.

**Step 11:** Once all questions have been asked, remove the napkin and adjust the chair so

that the patient can easily leave the room. Escort the patient to the front with his chart. When this process is done correctly, you will find fewer last minute cancellations or no shows and your schedule will be more productive.