Reducing the Odds of No-Shows/Cancellations
Tips from leaders in the dental industry

No-shows and last minute cancellations are all too common in the dental office. Pride Institute, a teaching organization that is dedicated to the success of dental practices, professionally, financially and personally, estimates cancellations for doctor and hygiene appointments to be as high as 30 percent! These missed appointments create empty chair time, wreak havoc on schedules and raise stress levels in the office. Since cancellations and failed appointments may always occur, here are some ideas to help reduce them, lower frustration and simplify office life.

What every patient needs

Amy Morgan, CEO of Pride Institute, offers these simple solutions to reduce cancellation/no-show rates.

Every patient must feel:

■ That they are being heard.
■ That they are in control.
■ That their needs are being met.

The most important thing you can do is develop rapport with potential patients during their first contact with the office.

■ Show respect for their life outside the dental office.
■ Use the 3 A’s:

• **Accept that they have questions about time and fees.**
  ■ “How much is a filling?”
  ■ “Do you have weekend appointments?”

• **Acknowledge these questions.**
  ■ “That’s a great question. All of our patients have questions about fees.”
  ■ “I’m glad you asked. I know your time is valuable.”

• **Ask questions of your own to focus them on their need.**
  ■ “Have you had any pain that’s kept you up at night yet?”
  ■ “Have you noticed bleeding when you brush yet?”

Make it personal and assumptive

When you call to remind patients of an upcoming appointment — be warm, be specific and make the message about them and their time with the doctor.

■ “Mrs. Jones, this is Mary calling from Dr. Smith’s office. He’s looking forward to meeting with you tomorrow. You and he have 30 minutes scheduled for tomorrow at 3:00 p.m. We’ll see you then.”

Call Member Services today at 1-800-552-1616.
Act fast when an appointment is missed

When you speak with patients, focus on your concern for them — not the hole left in your schedule.

- “I understand that things come up. If you tell me what prevented you from keeping your appointment, we can try to work around it this time.”

Speak from your heart — not your head

Immersed in the dental industry as we are, we have a tendency to speak in clinical terms instead of everyday terms that a patient can understand.

Front office consultants, Katherine Eitel and Associates, put together some do’s and don’ts for speaking to patients:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Do say</th>
<th>Don’t say</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tooth-colored fillings</td>
<td>Composite fillings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fee</td>
<td>Price/charge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We’ll do these in order of priority</td>
<td>We’ll do these later</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State-of-the-art</td>
<td>New</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tongue side</td>
<td>Lingual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cheek side</td>
<td>Buccal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chewing surface</td>
<td>Occlusal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Get you out of pain</td>
<td>Root canal</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Want to learn more about the dental industry leaders we’ve mentioned?

Check out these Web sites:

- www.katherineeitel.com
- www.prideinstitute.com

Missed appointments are an unfortunate reality in the dental industry. Creating a relationship from the moment the consumer calls your office is your best tool for making an appointment that’s hard to break. For more tools and techniques to reduce the number of cancellations/no-shows in your office — call your Member Services Representative and ask how to join one of our FREE webinars.