

5 REASONS PEOPLE AVOID THE DENTIST AND HOW YOU CAN OVERCOME THEIR EXCUSES!

MONEY – According to a Consumer Reports survey, cost was cited as a factor by 43% of readers who had delayed dental care. And many of these individuals had dental insurance. 23% percent of this group said their insurance wouldn't cover the procedure, and 24% said they had already used up the maximum that their insurance plan would cover for the year.

SOLUTION – Offer payment plans. Offer discounts to those who pay more up front. Forward-thinking practices have implemented continuity “membership” programs.

TIME – Let's be honest... we all use lack of time as an excuse to procrastinate or avoid activities we don't value highly enough. Your practice must combat the problem “out of sight, out of mind”.

SOLUTION – One study recommends that you should contact your patients at least 12 times per year. Incorporate the following: thank you cards, refrigerator magnets, calendars, email campaigns, and a recurring print newsletter.

LACK OF CONCERN – Many are ambivalent about dental care. Absence of pain is one reason. As you well know, periodontal disease usually advances slowly for years with little or no discomfort.

SOLUTION – Use your newsletter and email campaigns to educate your patients regarding symptoms and risk factors, as well as the health benefits of proper dental care.

FEAR – Past bad experiences, misinformation, or phobias may hinder some from receiving dental care. Many patients fear situations in which they perceive no control.

SOLUTION – The waiting room should be a tranquil environment; avoid posters on the horrors of gum disease. Take the time to discuss your patient's concerns. Explain the procedure in advance and agree upon a “stop sign” the patient can use any time they feel uncomfortable. Better communicate such options such as local anesthetic, oral sedatives, and nitrous oxide.

TRUST – In a recent survey, 30% of respondents reported little or very little trust in multiple aspects of the health care industry. Key aspects contributing to the degree of trust were levels of professional expertise and patient-centered care.

SOLUTION – Open communication is key. Look for ways to actively engage the client in evaluation of their treatment options. Be cautious when recommending cosmetic or optional treatments, as the patient may mistakenly perceive that you are acting out of economic self-interest.

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