



SCHEDULING DURING COVID-19

COMMUNICATION SHIFT FOR ADMINISTRATIVE TEAMS

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected general dentistry in a dramatic way. As we know, most GP offices are closed, resulting in many of our referring doctors picking up the phone and personally referring a patient to us for emergency care.

Dealing with an aggressive GP insisting they get their patient in **today** is not in their normal communication. This shift in scheduling communication can cause stress for the admin team. Keep in mind that every person deals with stress in their life differently. Some mask fear with anger. Try not to take it personally when a referring GP begins to show anger. Deal with the challenging conversation with love and compassion. Many GPs are fearful for the future of their practices and the livelihoods of their teams since their income stream has completely stopped.

- Centers for Disease Control Video [COVID-19: Managing Stress and Anxiety](#) (YouTube)

The reality is some of our Endo Mastery clients start their day fully booked with no emergency hold time since they are working less days and with limited staff. In order to adhere to CDC recommendations, administrative teams are scrutinizing the triage process to be certain only true emergency treatment is being scheduled, and to eliminate the non-urgent appointment requests.

Referring doctor: My patient has been in pain all night and I would like them to be seen right away.

Verbal skills: Dr. Smith, thank you for calling our office. What is the patient's name, tooth number and the patient's symptoms? Do you feel that the patient needs to be seen today? What is the best contact information for the patient?

Then say: Dr. Smith I will give Nancy a call and we will get her taken care of.

By talking to the patient directly we can determine how soon the patient actually needs to be seen. We want to make the process of referring a patient as easy as possible for the referring doctor.

Calling the patient: Hello Nancy, this is Melissa calling from Northwest Endodontics.

I just spoke to Dr. Smith regarding the discomfort that you're having. Have we ever seen you in our office before? Are you experiencing any hot or cold sensitivity? Any swelling or pressure? Did Dr. Smith mention anything about a possible crack in your tooth? Has the tooth had a root canal before?

If they say yes: How long ago did you have the root canal done?

At this point, if you feel the patient does not need to be seen today, we can appoint the patient out a few days and not ask the next question.

Do you feel that this is something that you need to be seen for today?

If they say yes: Dr. Goerig will see you today at 1 o'clock.

Is there any insurance that we can look into for you?

Okay Nancy, we will see you in the office today at 1 o'clock. I will go ahead and look into your insurance and give you a call back to let you know what your out-of-pocket co-pay will be for today that we will collect at the time of your appointment. Is this the best contact number for me to give you a call back once I've contacted your insurance? Are you familiar with where we are located?

At this point, you can also communicate any special instructions for the patient with respect to COVID-19, such as asking that anyone who accompanies them remains outside or in the car.

Do you have any questions for me? Okay great! I look forward to seeing you at 1:00.

PATIENT FEARFUL OF COVID-19 INFECTION AT THEIR VISIT

Admin team: As you can imagine Dr. Goerig and every member of our team has thoroughly researched CDC and OSAP guidelines and adhere to their protocols at the highest level to protect you, our team members and doctor from being exposed.

Prior to entering our practice:

- We determine if the patient is experiencing any COVID-19 symptoms, such as fever, dry cough, or shortness of breath
- Have they been exposed to anyone who has COVID-19 or suspected to have COVID-19?
- All pens are sterilized after each patient.
- All surfaces are wiped down after each patient visit.
- All instruments are autoclaved (highest level of sterilization).
- Non-patients are asked to stay in their car.
- Face masks, eye protection or face shields, gloves and disposable gowns are worn by the clinical team.
- Have you traveled out the country within the last few weeks?