

Dentist's Guide to Start Practice Amidst COVID-19

The Impact of COVID-19 on Dentistry Practice

This is Dr. Amanda and I work with StraightSmile Solutions. Today, I want to discuss how dentists can stand together and deal with the effects of COVID-19 (coronavirus).

"As we all know the novel coronavirus has infected and killed thousands of people across the globe so preparation and precaution is the key"

Eventually, it will all calm down and you will see your self after a few years telling this story to your kids and grandkids.

Since the pandemic has left our dentist practice across the globe go for a toss, let me give you some personal tips on how we can go about it wisely and steadily.

- **Screening your patients for symptoms before the checkup**

A few of the basic symptoms of COVID-19 are runny nose, fever, cough or difficulty breathing. You should not allow your staff or patients with such symptoms to come into your office without testing. It is important to put a sign up on your front door or your reception desk to let patients know that they will be subject to this screening process.

- **Be Accommodating of your Cancellation Policy**

Although some people might take advantage, however, do not be strict about your 24-hour no-cancellation policy. You may get people with a request for last-minute appointments, so it will all balance out.

- **Schedule a Waitlist for Patients**

This trick will help you keep your schedule filled. You can move your patients based on your waitlist. You can look accommodating to your patients if you move them up when someone is sick or has canceled. You can also request some to wait in cases of emergency. People appreciate honesty and are generally very understanding at such times.

"You need to be empathetic while you check on their welfare before you request the change in appointment"

"Hello, this is [name] calling from Dr. [name]'s office. May I speak with [name] please?"

"Hello, [name]. How is the family doing with the new turn of events? Is everyone doing ok?"

"Dr. [name] asked me to reach for your convenience because he/she noticed that we do not have a future appointment setup for [patient name]. With the current events, we know that summer is going to be crazy busy for us after this dies down and wanted to go ahead and get you scheduled for an appointment to save you a slot. Do you have a moment to get that scheduled now?"

- **Always Be Available on Phone or Email**

In such times you must be available for your patients on phone, email or text. Be prompt on answering phone calls and replying to emails and chats.

"Your phone will act as a lifeline for your practice".

You can have chances of new patients calling you and old patients wanting advice. If you have a VOIP provider, quickly learn how to download the app and answer calls from your cell phone or computer.

If you have a landline, have one staff member attend and take appointments for all calls during open hours. If that is not possible let them attend calls from home.

- **Online Consultations**

I suggest that you completely enhance your virtual and social media presence. You can do ortho and online consultations for patients.

"As patients change their buying behavior, it is becoming increasingly important to implement online virtual consultations."

Patients only need to come to the clinic for scans and get your treatment virtually.

- **Make use of Social Media Marketing**

Social Media is a great way to market yourself. Send emails and virtual newsletters to existing patients to be in touch.

- **Facebook and Instagram**

Facebook and Instagram are also a great place to start. You can also hire a freelance digital marketing person to develop dentistry content. You can ask your patients to sign a social media release and blog about their experience.

- **Content Schedulers**

You can use content schedulers like Hoot suite and Buffer to load your content and schedule it every week or two.

- **YouTube**

You can start your own YouTube Videos as a doctor and share your expertise. With YouTube and social media, you will have a wider audience and become a more trusted doctor.

You can also use a freelance website service like Fiverr where it will cost you as little as \$5 to hire someone to edit your video and even add nice touches like logos or watermarks to it. Hold office hours for patients to have discussions like in college. Your professors had office hours, and you could go in and pick their brains.

- **Use the Applications on Apple and Google Stores**

Applications like Virtual Consult and StraightSmile Solutions are a great way to get started as an online consultant. Start with simple online practice and work your way up. A minimal fee of \$100 a month can be worth it for unlimited virtual consults.

Zoom Platform

Zoom is an intuitive platform that allows you to hold a video conference with your new patient.

"Patients will feel cared for and comfortable with seeing the doctor via video chat."

You can integrate this with Calendly to automatically send the patient a link to a custom Zoom meeting for their appointment.

Calendly

You can use an app called Calendly, for patients to have a quick 10-minute conversation by meeting over Skype. Calendly is an online scheduling platform that allows patients to book their appointments in specifically assigned available time slots.

DocuSign

You must get contracts signed immediately, the same way you would do a same-day start. DocuSign allows you to send a contract to the patient for them to complete digitally.

- **Work from Home for your Staff**

Occupy your staff with social media marketing. It is not advisable to cut their hours or salaries so they might as well put their time to good use. Let them put posts on social media and market your clinic and practice.

Virtual Treatments by StraightSmile Solutions

We at **StraightSmile Solutions** offer virtual treatments to patients during the COVID-19 crisis. All you have to do is as follows.

- Ask someone to take a series of 8 photos of you using a smartphone or digicam.
- Submit all 8 photos of you using the form given to you and list your concerns.

- Someone from our team will assess your photos during the virtual appointment.
- You need to perform these steps 48 hours before the appointment for proper review.

I hope that my tips on how to jump-start your practice as a dentist are useful to you. I will also be glad to get in touch with you if you want to contact me. You can visit my website at www.straightsmilesolutions.com, and I will be more than happy to help you.

The infographic is titled "Straight Smile SOLUTIONS Virtual Consults". It provides instructions on how to take photos for a virtual consultation. It includes a list of three ways to take photos: using a digital camera, a smartphone, or a computer. It also includes a section titled "How to Photograph Your Smile" with a tip to use fingers, chopsticks, or spoons to retract the cheeks. The infographic features three columns of photos showing a person's profile, front view, and smile, with corresponding close-up images of the teeth. The Straight Smile SOLUTIONS logo is in the top right corner of the infographic.

Virtual Consults

We are pleased to offer virtual consultations to our patients making the process of taking photos for your virtual consultation easier. We have created a guide to help you take the best photos for your virtual appointment. Please read this guide before taking your photos to ensure you have the best possible results.

How it Works:

1. Ask someone to help you take the photos using a digital camera.
2. Submit all of your photos using the link below and do not edit any photos you take.
3. We will review your photos and contact you during your virtual appointment.

How to Photograph Your Smile

Please follow the instructions in the video shared for best results when taking photos. Make sure you have good lighting and use the link on your camera if possible.

Contact our office if you have any questions about this form.

You can use fingers, chopsticks or spoons to retract your cheeks.

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