Patient communication resource center available to help welcome patients back

The ADA launched a Patient Return Resource Center on July 7 with customizable communication tools for practices to use with patients during this time when many dentists are reopening.

These tools are intended to help support dentists and their dental teams in communicating about the changes patients will experience when returning for non-emergent care. It allows for customization so dentists can tailor specific points to their practice and patients. The contents include:

- A comprehensive FAQ to reassure patients with sample responses that address potential patient concerns.
- Different Facebook post options, complete with ready-to-go images and simple photo suggestions.
- A step-by-step visual guide to demonstrate to patients what will happen before, during and after their visit.

Practices can access the Patient Return Resources Center at www.ada.org/patientreturn. Photo/Provided by Dentsply Sirona.

How dental offices are protecting patients and staff

By Kyle D. Bogan, DDS

It’s not exactly business as usual for the dental industry — or patients — as offices reopen for routine care amid the COVID-19 pandemic. The outbreak of the virus has brought several changes, some of which may be permanent, in how dental offices protect their employees and patients.

“Dentists have always prioritized safety, but now we’ve significantly ramped up our precautions and standard practices because we want both patients and workers to feel comfortable during a time of great uncertainty,” said Dr. Kyle Bogan, a general dentist and speaker on workplace culture.

Bogan points out some concerns of patients and dental staffs and new protocols being implemented:

- Pre-screening patients. The asymptomatic carrier of COVID-19 limits the effectiveness of pre-screening patients for the virus, but patients should be asked a range of relevant pre-visit questions on the phone.
- “It forces dental staff to treat every patient as if they have the virus,” Bogan said. “Before patients come in, they need to be asked if they’ve had COVID-19 symptoms, and, if so, if they’ve been tested.”
- Upon arrival, a new look. Bogan said staff can allay patients’ fears by implementing new safety procedures the office is taking. The visit will look and feel different from the moment of arrival.
- “Patients can expect to wait outside upon arriving for their appointment until summoned by the staff,” he said. “This will greatly reduce the number of people in the waiting room and the time you’re close to other people. And patients should have their temperature taken upon arrival. The office should be devoid of the usual magazines and toys, and hand sanitizer should be available.”
- See RESOURCE CENTER, page A2

From the Editor

• Editor in chief Dr. David L. Hoexter shares images from the days before social distancing.

News

• America’s ToothFairy launches campaign for kids during COVID-19.

Industry News

• AAPD, AAPD Foundation and Henry Schein to help enhance access to dental care for children.
• Designs for Vision wants you to protect yourself against aerosols.
• BIOLASE’s Epic Hygiene laser meets guidelines to minimize risk of COVID-19 transmission.

Implant Tribune

• AAID develops patient guide for what to expect at a dentist appointment during COVID-19.
• X-Nav Technologies: Improve dental implant surgery with X-Mark.
Socializing in the Hamptons

Editor in chief Dr. David L. Hoexter shares images from the days before social distancing

Above, at the Southampton Art Festival, from left, Dr. Igor Gerzon, Dr. David L. Hoexter and Dr. Liza Kaufman.

Top left, Robert Janesh, chef at the prestigious Noyac Golf Club in Sag Harbor, N.Y., and husband of Dena (Straumann Implant executive), with Dr. David L. Hoexter, editor in chief of Dental Tribune.

Bottom left, Dr. Larry Bryskin, winner of his division in the Ellen’s Run 5K race to help avoid and cure breast cancer, proudly displays his winning T-shirt at his oral check-up visit.

Photos/Provided by Dr. David L. Hoexter, Editor in Chief, Dental Tribune

About the doctor

Dr. Kyle Bogan is a general dentist and a speaker/workshop leader at dental conferences around the world. He is also aرد ادلا

ultraviolet lights to reduce exposure to aerosols.

- Diligent hygiene and cleaning. “Dentists and hygienists should adhere strictly to hand hygiene measures,” Bogan said, “including before and after contact with patients, after contact with contaminated surfaces or equipment, and after removing PPE. Disposable gowns should be discarded in a dedicated waste container. Cloth isolation gowns should be laundered after each use. The staff should thoroughly clean patient treatment areas between appointments.”

“It’s important for people to get back to the dentist for routine treatment,” Bogan said. “The virus can give some people a reason to stay away, so it’s critical for dental practices to do all the right things to mitigate risk.”

patients of the practice’s commitment to maintaining up-to-date infection control procedures.

- Four downloadable signs dentists can print for their practice.

The ADA is collaborating with Dentsply Sirona to help promote the resource center to dentists across the country. Dentsply Sirona sales representatives will share the resource center link with ADA members this summer.

“As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, patients are looking at their own well-being differently — and may have questions when resuming their dental visits. It is important that we do not lose sight of their needs and concerns as part of our rebound and recovery efforts,” Dentsply Sirona VP Chief Clinical Officer Terri Dolan said.

(Sources: American Dental Association and Dentsply Sirona)

Resources

Access the Patient Return Resources Center at www.ada.org/patientreturn.