

Missed Appointments = Missed Opportunities

Tips to Reduce Your No-Shows



- Thank patients for keeping their appointments and arriving on time.
- Engage providers to explain the reason and timing of the next appointment.
- Educate patients who have chronic conditions that their status and medications need to be monitored with regular office appointments, even if they feel fine.
- Develop relationship with patients by performing pre-appointment screening (e.g., reviewing history and films), which requires an investment of time on the patients' part and engages them in the relationship with you.
- Hold a team conference before every clinic and prioritize a review of the schedule for today. Cancel patients who have been admitted to the hospital.
- Ask patients how they want to be reminded of their appointment and provide options for cell phone and home phone.
- Perform automated telephone appointment reminder calls using appropriate technology such as the Televox or PhoneTree Systems.
- Document disconnected phone numbers in the practice management system.
- Make the reminder call at least two days prior to the appointment.
- Ease patients' ability to notify you of a cancellation by offering 24/7 cancellation line with voicemail.
- Develop a protocol for how cancelled appointments will be rescheduled for other patients.
- Rebook the cancellation slots with emergent patient appointments for the day.
- Establish a waitlist of patients who want earlier appointments for rescheduling.
- Provide information via your phones about transportation, location and travel advisories.
- Communicate importance of being a 'good neighbor'.
- Document history of patients' no-shows and identify "frequent no-show" in your practice management system alert messaging.
- Do not offer "prime" appointments to patients with a history of no-shows.
- Do not bump patients – they will bump you.
- Contact patients who miss appointments and rebook them promptly.
- Engage the patient in the relationship with the practice by making statements such as: "Dr. Jones was very disappointed that you didn't show up for your appointment...", "I'll let Dr. Jones know that you wish to reschedule. When shall I tell him that you would like to reschedule?"
- Send correspondence about no-shows directly from the physician.
- Target strategic overbooking and/or manual reminders (phone calls or emails) to patients who are pre-disposed not to show for their appointment. Patients pre-disposed not to show are those with a history of >2 no-shows, patients scheduled for diagnostic procedures, patients who were previously bumped, and patients who were scheduled more than 60 days in advance.
- Confirm that you have cancelled previously scheduled appointments in the practice management system when a patient calls for an acute appointment request.