

Patient Communication Verbal Skills

During a time of rapid change and uncertainty, here are some simple suggestions for communicating with your patients as of March 13, 2020. Stay tuned for updates!

Sample statement on website and social media: The safety and health of our patients and team members is our highest priority. Please know that we are following all of the latest recommendations from the CDC as well as directives from local and state agencies. Our standard sterilization and disinfection protocols are in place to prevent the spread of communicable diseases. Thank you for your patience with any questions we may ask regarding your recent health and travels. For more information on the coronavirus, visit the CDC website here.[1]

Calling ahead of appointments: We are looking forward to seeing you on _____. We are asking all of our patients a few questions for everyone's safety. (Ask current, recommended screening questions regarding health, travel, and contact with others who may be sick.) Please know that we are adhering to the highest levels of infection control as we have always done for safety. We are looking forward to seeing you.

Same day treatment: Because of the rapidly changing nature of things, many patients will prefer to get their treatment done immediately. Make sure to give them that opportunity when it is available: "Would it make sense to get this taken care of today while you are here and we know we can do it now?"

Addressing patient safety concerns: I understand your concerns. Can I share with you what we are doing for the safety of all of our patients? We are prescreening all of our patients for any risk factors. We are also following the highest levels of sterilization and infection control in the whole office for your safety and peace-of-mind. Does that make sense?

Handling cancellation requests: "I want to cancel my appointment."

"Oh. Thank you for calling. Can you share with me your concern?"

If the response is recent travel, compromised immune system, age, or not feeling well:
"I totally understand and we appreciate your letting us know. Let's go ahead and get your appointment rescheduled."

If it is a peace-of-mind objection: "Thank you for sharing your concern. You are not alone! Can I share with you what we have in place for the safety of our team, you and all of our patients? We are asking every patient screening questions based on the most current information from the CDC and we are adhering to the highest levels of infection control throughout the entire office, as we always do, for the safety of everyone involved. Does that help? (If they still want to cancel, be accommodating: "Let's go ahead and get your appointment rescheduled.")"