

 RecallMaxTM COVID-19
 Recovery and Beyond

COVID-19 Call Scripts Scheduling and Confirming Appointments

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**Disclaimer\* Information provided contains generalized COVID-19 precautionary health measure information for reference purposes only and should not be used without review and modification to accommodate specific dental college or health authority COVID-19 regulatory measures in your area. This information is not intended to be a substitute for professional advice and is being made available for reference purposes only. RecallMaxTM disclaims any and all liability to any party for any direct, indirect, implied, punitive, special, incidental or other consequential damages arising directly or indirectly from any use of this information.**

**Scheduling and Confirming Appointments - The New Reality**

In returning for dental care, patients will need to be reassured about the safety of their appointments, safety measures will need to be explained, and patients will need to be informed of changes to clinic, scheduling, and appointment procedures affecting them. This includes informing patients of COVID-19 appointment screening protocols.

This represents a great deal of information that needs to be seamlessly conveyed to patients as an extension of existing scheduling and confirmation procedures so as not to cause concern for patients.

We recommend that practices define their scheduling and confirmation communication guidelines in advance and that teams prepare themselves to properly schedule and confirm patients through the use of call scripts and role play. The clearer and more confident team members are in informing patients regarding safety measures and appointment procedures, the more reassured patients will become. We suggest this not be left undefined, resulting in team members “winging” it in the moment.

The following script recommendations are intended to support practices with this task. Also, supplementing confirmation procedures with a visit guide ensures patients receive detailed information related to safety measures and appointment procedures, better preparing them for appointments. **(See RecallMaxTM COVID-19 Patient Visit Guide for sample.)**

**Script Recommendations**

The scheduling and confirmation script samples on the following pages have been provided in a Word file format, so they can be easily modified to reflect the procedures adopted by your office and other information you feel is important to convey to your patients. This includes instructions related to having patients wait in their vehicles or outside of offices until their appointments begin, which some offices are following.

We have outlined in **blue** print, patient and appointment information you would insert into the scripts as well as specific procedure information you may wish to convey to patients. This information can be entered into RecallMax TM automated call scripts, so staff have instant access when scheduling or confirming appointments. This information can also be copied and pasted onto practice stationary and provided as a handout.

Scripts contain information related to precautionary measures offices are adopting across the dental profession for reference purposes **and should not be used without review and modification to comply with the specific dental college or health authority COVID-19 regulatory measures in your area.**

**Sample Call Scripts - Scheduling / Confirming Appointments In Advance (One Or More Weeks)**

**Step 1 Announce Your Return / Inform and Reassure Patients**

*Hi (Patient) this is (name) calling from (office). Our office has reopened and we are now scheduling dental appointments. It’s been a very challenging time for everyone and we are hoping all is well with you and your family?*

*I’m calling to update you regarding our safety procedures and to (reason for the call - confirm an upcoming appointment / schedule an appointment for you / follow up on an appointment with you / schedule an appointment you missed because of the closure / remind you of a hygiene or recall appointment ).*

*(Patient) in reopening our office, the safety of our patients is our primary concern and we are strictly following all (state / provincial) infection control regulations. We are also taking other measures to ensure our patients are safe during dental appointments, including screening for COVID-19 symptoms before appointments, that I will explain to you. All of this information is available on our website, and I can also send you a PDF copy once we are done.*

**Step 2 Screen Patients / Confirm, Schedule or Remind Patients Of Appointments**

*Couple of questions before I get to your appointment;*

1. *Have you experienced any dental issues or concerns while the office was closed?*
2. *Have you experienced any fever, cough, shortness of breath, or flu like symptoms within the last 2 weeks?*
3. *Have you had any contact with a suspected or confirmed COVID-19 person in the last 2 weeks?*

**“Yes” Response** *- (Patient) in following regulatory health guidelines, I will need to follow up with you in regards to your appointment two weeks from now. I know this is inconvenient but this will ensure your safety and the safety of all of our patients and staff.*

*I will contact you at the end of two weeks and make every effort to get you into our schedule as soon as possible. Please let us know if you have any questions or concerns in the meantime. Take care.*

**“No” Response - Continue with Standard Confirmation or Scheduling Procedures**

*(Follow standard procedures to - confirm an upcoming appointment / schedule an appointment / follow up on an outstanding appointment / schedule a missed appointment because of the closure / remind patients of hygiene or recall appointments. )*

**Step 3 Confirm Appointment Details / Provide Visit Information / Sign Off**

*(Patient) I have you scheduled / confirmed for (date / appointment details).*

*As far as our appointment procedures for your next visit are concerned:*

*1 We will confirm your appointment (x) days in advance (by phone / by email / by text) and if you are experiencing any COVID-19 symptoms at that time, we will need to re-scheduled your appointment if necessary.*

*2 Also, our appointment procedures have changed and we will confirm our procedures with you when we confirm your appointment. To give you a sense of some of the changes we have made:* (With this scripts, you do not want to provide patients with detailed information too far in advance of appointments. Determine the top 3 measures you have taken or procedure changes or you have made that you can highlight for patients that will build confidence patients will be safe during their appointments and ease concerns they may have, i.e.).

* We have made changes to our reception procedures - to maintain social distancing, patients will be asked to wait in their vehicles or outside of the office until their appointments begin.
* We will screen for symptoms and take temperatures when patients arrive.
* All of our staff are screened on a daily basis.
* We are taking extra sanitization measures in the office throughout the day.
* We are following strict clinic procedures - use of protective equipment and allowing extra time in-between appointments for the thorough sterilization of treatment rooms.

*3 If for any reason you need to change this appointment, please give us as much notice as possible so we can make the appointment available to other patients.*

*You can review or download information regarding our safety measures and office procedures from our website, or I can send you more information if you like?*

*Really looking forward to seeing you at your appointment - stay well.*

**Sample Call Scripts - Confirming Appointments A Few Days Before**

**Confirming Appointments Few Days Before - Personal Call**

*Hi (Patient) this is (name) calling from (office). I am calling to confirm your appointment (date / appointment details)* and provide you with some important appointment details.

To start, I’d like to ask you a few health questions;

1. *Have you experienced any fever, cough, shortness of breath, or flu like symptoms within the last 2 weeks?*
2. *Have you had any contact with a suspected or confirmed COVID-19 person in the last 2 weeks?*

**“Yes” Response** *- (Patient) in following regulatory health guidelines, we will need to reschedule your appointment and I can contact you two weeks from now to reschedule. I know this is inconvenient but we need to ensure your safety and the safety of all of our patients and staff.*

*I will contact you at the end of two weeks and make every effort to get you into our schedule as soon as possible. Please let us know if you have any questions or concerns in the meantime. Take care.*

**“No” Response *-* Procced With Appointment Information:**

*Our appointment procedures have changed and we would like to provide you with information related to our safety precautions and new appointment procedures* (With this script, inform patients of procedure changes you have made they need to be aware of and provide other information that will build patient confidence in the safety of their appointments and ease concerns they may have, i.e.):

1. Reception procedures - for social distancing, please call or text when you arrive & wait in your vehicle or outside of the office until your scheduled appointment time. The office will call or text you back when your treatment room is ready and a staff member will then greet you at the door.

2. Health screening procedures when you arrive - screening questions / taking of temperature / use of masks / social distancing requests / other protocols your office adopts.

3. Clinic procedures - sterilization and sanitization of Tx rooms and equipment / PPE equipment PPE changed after each patients / procedures followed / other pertinent?

**Steer Patients -** *You can review or download information regarding our safety measures and office procedures from our website, or I can send you more information if you like?*

**Sign Off By Reassuring Patients -** *Your safety is our top priority and we are confident these procedures will keep you safe during your appointment and we appreciate your co-operation.*

*Looking forward to seeing you (day)!*

**Sample Call Scripts - Leaving Voice Messages**

**Confirming Appointments**

*Hi (Patient) this is (name) calling from (office). Our office has reopened and we are now scheduling dental appointments.*

*We are taking extensive precautions to protect the safety of our patients, and I am calling to confirm your appointment (date / appointment details) and provide you with additional information regarding the health measures we have implemented. You can also go to our website and download a copy of our COVID-19 Patient Visit Guide for detailed information.*

*It’s been a very challenging time for everyone and we are hoping all is well with you and your family. Please call to confirm you appointment and we will go over our health information with you.*

*We are looking forward to seeing you again.*

**Re-scheduling Missed Appointments**

*Hi (Patient) this is (name) calling from (office). Our office has reopened and we are now scheduling dental appointments.*

*We are taking extensive precautions to protect the safety of our patients, and I am calling to re-schedule the (type of appointment) you had scheduled (date) that was cancelled due to the office closure, and provide you with additional information regarding the health measures we have implemented. You can also go to our website and download a copy of our COVID-19 Patient Visit Guide for detailed information.*

*It’s been a very challenging time for everyone and we are hoping all is well with you and your family. Please call to re-schedule your appointment and we will go over our health information with you.*

*We are looking forward to seeing you again.*

**Reminding Patients Of Upcoming Unscheduled Hygiene or Recall Appointments**

*Hi (Patient) this is (name) calling from (office). Our office has reopened and we are now scheduling dental appointments.*

*We are taking extensive precautions to protect the safety of our patients, and I am calling to schedule your up-coming (hygiene / recall) visit which is coming due for (month), and provide you with additional information regarding the health measures we have implemented. You can also go to our website and download a copy of our COVID-19 Patient Visit Guide for detailed information.*

*It’s been a very challenging time for everyone and we are hoping all is well with you and your family. Please call to schedule your appointment and we will go over our health information with you.*

*We are looking forward to seeing you again.*

**Role Play Guidelines - Mastery of the Message**

There are three factors in role-playing that are key in learning how to get essential messages across to your patients:

1. Repetition.
2. Repetition.
3. Repetition.

Developing communication skills to deliver essential messages to patients is a learning process with moments of awkwardness and discomfort. Trust the process and soon you will master the messages you are wanting to get across to your patients.

**Learning Process and Goals**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  |  | Flow / Ability To Respond |
|  |  | Putting It Into Your Own Words | **Mastery** |
|  | Struggle / Work With Others Words | **Comfortable** | **4** |
| Awkward / Ridged / Forced | **Uncomfortable** | **3** |  |
| **Phony / Contrived****1** | **2** |  |  |

**How do you get from one level to the next?**

Once you have worked through your messages enough times, you will begin to automatically express them without thinking about it. Although it’s key you do not miss any components of the message you need to convey, you will find a rhythm, your own rhythm, that you can feel when it falls into place. Your messages become clear, patients respond positively, adverse situations resulting from miss-information or lack of information are avoided, patients are reassured, intended results are produced. In the beginning, you have to defeat your concern about feeling awkward in order to achieve mastery of the message.