



1. Understand the Root Causes

Start by identifying why appointments are being missed. Common reasons might include:

- Forgetfulness
- Financial concerns
- Lack of perceived value
- Scheduling conflicts

Action Step:

Analyze past broken appointments to find patterns, such as time slots or patient types prone to cancellations.

2. Improve Communication and Appointment Confirmation

Strong communication reduces no-shows.

- **Pre-Appointment Communication:** Use clear and engaging language during booking to emphasize the importance of the appointment.
 - Example: *"We've reserved this time just for you, as part of our commitment to your oral health."*
- **Appointment Reminders:** Implement multi-channel reminders (text, email, and calls) tailored to patient preferences.
- **Ask for a favor:** To avoid no-shows, ask them the favor of letting you know 48 hours in advance if they need to reschedule.

Action Step:

Introduce automated reminder systems with personalization. Include a confirmation step to ensure the patient commits to attending.

3. Educate Patients on the Importance of Oral Health

Many patients cancel because they don't understand the value of their appointment.

- Train team members to reinforce the importance of maintaining regular visits and addressing specific patient needs.
 - Example: *"Regular visits like this help us catch problems early, saving you time, discomfort, and money in the long run."*

Action Step:

Create visual aids or handouts highlighting the consequences of missed appointments (e.g., progression of cavities).

4. Enforce a Broken Appointment Policy

Establish clear policies that discourage cancellations while showing understanding.

- Require notice for cancellations (e.g., 24-48 hours).
- Implement a rescheduling fee for repeat offenders.
- For first-time offenders, use a soft, empathetic approach to educate.

Action Step:

Script verbiage for team members to politely communicate the policy.



Example: *"We understand life happens, but short-notice cancellations impact other patients who need care. Let's find a time that works best for you moving forward."*

5. Optimize Scheduling

- **Prime Time Booking:** Reserve high-demand time slots (e.g., mornings or late afternoons) for reliable patients.
- **Pre-Block for Repeat Cancellers:** Offer less convenient times until they build reliability.

Action Step:

Use data to identify reliable patients and adjust scheduling strategies accordingly.

6. Build Stronger Patient Relationships

Patients are more likely to show up when they feel connected to the practice.

- Personalize interactions by remembering details about the patient's preferences or life events.
- Show appreciation through small gestures, like thank-you notes after a first visit.

Action Step:

Train staff to take notes in patient records about personal preferences or conversations that can be referenced later.



7. Track and Measure Progress

- Use KPIs like no-show rates, reschedule rates, and patient feedback.
- Share metrics with the team to celebrate wins and identify areas for improvement.

Action Step:

Conduct monthly team meetings to review progress, brainstorm solutions, and reinforce the importance of reducing broken appointments.

