

# 5 Ways to Avoid a Hygiene Schedule Nightmare

*The COVID shutdown during the Spring is having an unintended consequence this Fall: a gaping hole in the hygiene schedule.*

Here are 5 ways to fill the gap:

## 1 Send “Use It or Lose It” Benefits Letter Early

Identify patients with unused dental benefits and remind them via a letter, postcard, email or text message to schedule before their benefits expire at the end of the year.



“Most dental practices proactively schedule their hygiene patients for their next visit, whether that is six months away for a prophy or three months away for perio patients,” explained Rachel Wall, RDH, the founder of Inspired Hygiene. “Since hygienists weren’t seeing patients from mid-March through early June, that meant they couldn’t pre-schedule the visits that would normally take place mid-September through early December.”



Rachel Wall, RDH, BS  
Inspired Hygiene

## 2 Confirm Hygiene Allowances

Some benefits plans such as Guardian Dental have adjusted their benefit plans to allow two cleanings in one calendar year, instead of requiring they be scheduled at least six months apart. Check with other payors to see if they have made similar adjustments.

## 3 Reactivate Overdue Patients

Run a list of patients who are overdue for hygiene or who have outstanding treatment plans. You can also reach out to anyone you saw for emergency dental treatment to convert them into hygiene patients.

## 4

### Identify Perio Patients & Add Blocks for SRP

Pre-COVID, many practices didn't have time to block their schedule for scaling and root planning procedures, which can take one to two hours. Now's a good time to implement a proactive periodontal program. Run a report of perio patients treatment planned for D4341 and D4342 and schedule them into the blocks. When you call the patients to schedule them, try using this phrasing: "I know that you saw Erica the last time you were here and she recommended gum therapy to address the active infection in the gums and in the bones surrounding the teeth. We know it's more important than ever to have a healthy immune system. Can we find a convenient time for you to get the infection treated and maximize your dental benefits?"

## 5

### Start Making Calls Today

Sometimes, your patients just need to be reminded of the value of a thorough oral health evaluation. By calling them to say you want to ensure they can maximize their benefits and keep their smile healthy and cavity-free, you let them know that you care. When people like you and trust you, they are more likely to want to do business with you.

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## More Helpful Resources



**PatientPrism.com**

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**Your phone is the lifeline to your practice.** Callers have more questions than ever about safety protocols, treatment costs, insurance coverage, and scheduling. Patient Prism tells you what to say to overcome their concerns and schedule them for the dental care they called you about.

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