

Reducing No-Show Appointments in Pediatric Patients

Missed appointments have a significant impact on a practice's productivity, revenue and operational efficiency. When a patient does not show up for a scheduled appointment, they take away time that a provider could have with another patient. Although no-shows cannot be eliminated entirely, it is important for patients to know the value of appointments, for staff to be aware of the no-show policy and for a practice to know why patients no-showed to an appointment. Here are tips on how to reduce no-shows:

- R** Reschedule appointments if a parent knows they cannot make it to a visit.
 - E** Educate patients about the benefits of completed appointments. Provide information about scheduling, canceling and rescheduling appointments.
 - D** Document reasons patients did not show up for appointment.
 - U** Update patient contact information at every visit.
 - C** Collaborate with community organizations to assist families with transportation, food banks and shelters.
 - E** Encourage all staff to reinforce the importance of attending all scheduled visits.
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- N** Notify patients about appointments by using reminder techniques such as phone calls, patient portal messages, letters, postcards and appointment cards. Include a method for patients to reschedule appointments.
 - O** Opt-out scripting when offering a new appointment (Instead of asking, "Would you like to schedule your child's well-care visit?" say, "We are calling to schedule your child's well-care visit. Our next available appointment is _____.")
 - S** Study EMR reports that track no-show rates. If EMR reporting is unavailable, manually track no-show appointment data (pre- and post- interventions)
 - H** Help families and patients overcome barriers that may prevent them from coming to appointments by using social determinants of health screening tool.
 - O** Operationalize the process for following up with patients who did not show up for their appointment.
 - W** Walk-in slots: Consider allowing a specific number of patients to use walk-in slots to accommodate frequent no-show patients.
 - S** Schedule same-day appointments to accommodate patients who frequently no-show or go to the urgent care or emergency department.



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