

Get Their E-Mail - Often!

Donald M. Petersen Jr., BS, HCD(hc), FICC(h), Publisher

It's hard to find someone these days who doesn't have an e-mail address. While many of the other benefits promised by the Internet have not been fulfilled, e-mail has certainly made staying in touch a whole lot easier.

In our office, utilization of e-mail has:

- drastically reduced faxes;
- eliminated a significant amount of mail (USPS, UPS and Federal Express);
- provided an effective alternative to waiting for a return phone call after leaving a message; and
- allowed us to communicate with more people, more efficiently and effectively.

And yet, most DCs still aren't collecting their patients' e-mail addresses!

Why not?

Certainly getting your patients' e-mail addresses is just as important as getting their phone numbers. It allows you to quickly communicate with them about any number of subjects, including:

- a change in your office hours;
- the week you'll be on vacation;
- the need to reschedule an appointment;
- appointment reminders;
- important announcements;
- new services;
- birthday and anniversary wishes;
- information they may be interested in (a monthly newsletter); and
- just staying in touch.

Just think how many phone calls you could avoid making if instead, you used e-mail to notify your patients you would be out of the office next week.

Patient relationships are all about contact. If they don't hear from you, they won't think of you until they are in pain. Even then, your patients may be inclined to seek relief from whatever last held their attention.

Maintaining an active patient base is all about sustaining positive relationships that keep you in their minds, especially when their friends, co-workers or family members have health problems.

What are you doing to make your patients think of you - or do they? Out of sight is out of mind!

Your patients should think of you (and your practice) when they think about their health, either positively or negatively. They should think of you by name, not by your profession.

E-mail is another tool to make your practice more successful. It gives you the opportunity to communicate with your patients at a level at which they know you don't want something. You're just doing it because you care.

You can send them an encouraging note, share information they might be interested in, or even provide a monthly e-mail newsletter. If you keep it short and easy to read, patients will read it. And although they may not respond, they will remember you were thinking about them and concerned enough about their health to contact them with the information.

It's no secret that *Dynamic Chiropractic* offers a patient e-mail newsletter through ChiroWeb. The program offers most of the benefits listed above. We believe ours is the best program available, but that isn't really the point.

The point is, I truly believe in strong, close relationships. I use e-mail to maintain those relationships, in place of letters. There is something special about the written word that transcends the spoken word. It may lack intonation, but it is permanent. An e-mail can be saved (printed out) or shared (forwarded), giving it the ability to speak long after delivery.

E-mail is a powerful communication tool that can significantly enhance your relationships with your patients. Even if you don't use our patient e-mail newsletter program, at the very least you should be collecting your patients' e-mails and sending them something every month.

E-mail is incredibly economical. There is no printing and no postage - just a chance to encourage your patients and remind them of how much you care. It may even cause them to think of you the next time a referral opportunity presents itself.

Ask each patient for his or her e-mail address on the first visit, and verify it is correct on each and every visit thereafter. (Many people change their e-mail as they change jobs.) Don't miss out on so much, when all it takes is a small change in your office procedures.

DMP Jr.

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