

Dental Trends and Innovations to Look Out for in 2023

Every year, a mixture of technology and culture change means every industry starts following the trends of society. And dentistry is no exception.

As the dental profession looks to expand by approximately 10% in 2023, you can be sure that dentistry services will be as high in demand as ever.

From the way we look after our patients to the dental office marketing techniques, here's what you need to look out for in dentistry in 2023.

Online marketing will be the biggest trend in dentistry in 2023

Every year we edge ever closer to the digital world, and 2023 follows that trend. Dentist offices around the country will be looking to ditch the print and level up the online marketing strategies. Here's how.

Dental professionals will leverage the power of social media

While everybody needs dental interventions from time to time, it doesn't mean they know where the best place to get it is. That's why dental professionals are going to use 2023 to expand their use of social media.

Your patients spend a lot of time here, so if you want them to notice you, you need to meet them halfway!

Dental offices will put more emphasis on their websites

Gone are the days of pamphlets and promotional print. We're in an age where anyone who's anyone has their own website.

Here, you can communicate with your patients, allow them to book appointments easily and let them know ahead of time the treatments offered in your office.

Not only that, but your website is your own small space on the internet where you can allow your patients to see the values upheld within your dental practice, and what sets you apart from the competition. See, patients care about more than just credentials these days, they want to know that the personality and "vibe" of their dental office matches them.

There will be a focus on creating highly informative videos and blogs in-house to provide value to patients

Oral health is a growing topic, particularly amongst younger people. And with Google, most people are likely to search for answers online before consulting with a professional.

So why not make sure that you patients (and the wider internet) have access to important information directly from your own in-house team of experts?



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Social proof will be leveraged further in 2023

As we mentioned previously, patients prioritize trust in their dentists. And while you know how good you are, people want to

see that other people speak highly of you. Think of it like a restaurant rating – the more positive reviews you get, the more likely people will buy from you.

Make sure you're highlighting customer testimonials across your socials and website. If you don't have many, reach out to current patients and ask if they would be willing to complete a survey.

Dentists will favor minimally invasive treatment options

As technology evolves, so do our dental treatment techniques. In 2023, dentists will look to utilize new treatment equipment that causes significantly less damage to surrounding tissue, takes less time to complete and causes less pain for patients.

Taking the time to learn and incorporate new technologies, including the introduction of laser treatments, will greatly improve your dental office's appeal.

Patients will be looking for predominantly cosmetic and preventative treatments

While some patients will inevitably have to receive emergency dental restoration in 2023, the rise in oral health education means patients will be looking for preventative treatments – before the bigger problems arise!

And as always, the "Hollywood smile" remains popular, and this popularity will continue to rise in 2023.

Patients want more natural dental products

We're seeing a rise in patients going back to simple yet effective natural solutions when it comes to dental care.

We're in a health-conscious time where we're looking closer than ever at everything we put in and on our body. And that includes the way we look after our teeth.

In 2023, you can expect to see many patients adopting practices such as using charcoal toothpaste and trying their hand at oil pulling

to help protect their teeth, much in the way we did before the days of Colgate!

Digital dentistry will become more prevalent

The use of new 3D imaging techniques will be important in 2023 as we look to advance the diagnostic and treatment tools we use in our dental offices. This also means dental radiographers can create precise replications of the mouth and teeth using 3D and augmented reality modelling, which can vastly improve the diagnostic process.

Using 3D printing, dental professionals can create custom-fit crowns, guards and much more – and all for a fraction of the price!

Patients will be offered more access to dentists online through tele-dentistry

COVID-19 absolutely changed the way we all work. We were forced to find ways to connect remotely and support our patients from a distance until treatment was deemed necessary.

And while I think it's fair to say none of us want to go through such a painful global event again, we have a lot to learn and takeaway from how we look after our patients from it.

Specifically, the ability to see patients through video calls has revolutionized not just dentistry, but the entire medical practitioner – patient relationship.

Conducting initial appointments via video calls means:

- Less waiting time
- Less chance of delayed appointments
- Less commuting for patients
- More time for in-office appointments for those that need treatment
- Cost effective for patients and dental offices

If your dental service isn't offering video appointments, you need to introduce them in 2023!

Help your dental office keep up with the trends in 2023

2023 is all about leveraging technology to help the visibility of your dental office and making dental services more accessible and comfortable for your patients.

Make sure your office is ready to enter 2023 ahead of the dental trends so your patients and staff can enjoy a joyful, prosperous year full of professional growth and happy oral health! 🌈

Oral Implications of Marijuana Use

There is no question that marijuana use can have profound implications on one's oral health. From gum disease and tooth decay to bad breath and stained teeth, the effects of marijuana are well-documented.

But what about the dental profession? How should dentists and other dental professionals handle patients who use marijuana?

Why do people take marijuana?

When treating a patient with substance related oral problems, it helps to understand the drug as a whole to help you treat your patients unbiasedly whilst in your care.

Marijuana is taken for a variety of reasons. Some people use it to relax or relieve stress, while others use it to improve their appetite or counteract the effects of chemotherapy. Still others use marijuana to self-medicate for conditions like anxiety or depression.

While there are many potential benefits to taking marijuana, there are also some risks. These risks can be magnified when marijuana is used in combination with other drugs or alcohol.

What are the physical and psychological effects of marijuana use?

The effects of marijuana use vary depending on the person.

In some people, marijuana use can cause anxiety or panic attacks. It can also exacerbate pre-existing mental health conditions like schizophrenia or bipolar disorder.

Marijuana use can also have physical effects, including:

- Reduced blood pressure
- Increased heart rate
- Impaired motor skills and coordination
- Dry mouth and throat
- Increased appetite

Additionally, marijuana use can result in impaired judgment and decision-making, which could lead to accidents or injuries.

What are the oral implications of marijuana use?

The first thing to understand is that marijuana use is still illegal in many states. And yet, according to the CDC, at least 18% of the population have smoked weed at least once.

This means that dentists and other dental professionals must tread carefully when it comes to treating patients who use the drug. In some cases, it may be best to simply refer the patient to a specialist who can better deal with their unique situation.

That said, there are certain oral implications of marijuana use that all dental professionals should be aware of. Here are a few of the most important:

Gum Disease

Gum disease is one of the most common oral implications of marijuana use. Marijuana smokers are more likely to develop gingivitis, which is an early form of gum disease. If left untreated, gingivitis can progress into periodontitis, which is a more serious form of gum disease that can lead to tooth loss.

Tooth Decay

Another common oral implication of marijuana use is tooth decay. This is because marijuana smokers tend to have lower levels of saliva in their mouths. Saliva is important for keeping the mouth clean and preventing the buildup of plaque and bacteria. Without enough saliva, these things can build up and lead to cavities and tooth decay.

Bad Breath

Bad breath is another common oral implication of marijuana use. This is because marijuana smokers tend to have a buildup of tar and other chemicals in their mouths. This can lead to an unpleasant smell that lingers long after the smoker has finished using the drug.

Stained Teeth

Stained teeth are another common oral implication of marijuana use. This is because the tar and other chemicals in marijuana can stain teeth over time. In some cases, the stains can be so severe that they are impossible to remove with traditional teeth whitening methods.

How to care for a dental patient using marijuana

Treating a patient whose symptoms come from marijuana use shouldn't be any different to treating any other patient. However, there is always a level of discretion and sensitivity needed around areas of substance use given that we cannot be aware of the full scope of the problem (if indeed there is one).

- Be sure to ask your patients about their marijuana use. This will help you to better understand their unique situation and needs.
- If a patient is reluctant to talk about their marijuana use,

don't push them. Unless it's vital to their treatment, you could cause potential complications to their mental health.

- Be aware of the oral implications of marijuana use. This will help you to better diagnose and treat any problems that your patients may be experiencing.

What treatments are available for dental patients with marijuana oral health problems?

There are a number of treatments available for dental patients who have oral health problems related to marijuana use.

Here are a few of the most common:

Gum disease

Treatment for gum disease typically involves a deep cleaning of the teeth and gums. This can be done by a dentist or periodontist. In some cases, surgery may also be necessary.

Tooth decay

Treatment for tooth decay typically involves fillings or crowns. In severe cases, tooth extractions may also be necessary.

Bad breath

Treatment for bad breath typically involves mouthwashes and other products that can help to remove the tar and other chemicals from the mouth. In severe cases, surgery may also be necessary.

Stained teeth

Treatment for stained teeth typically involves teeth whitening. In severe cases, veneers may also be necessary.

The more you know, the better the care you can give

Marijuana use can lead to a number of oral health problems. However, there are a number of treatments available that can help to mitigate these problems.

As a dental professional, it is important to be aware of the implications of marijuana use and how to best care for your patients who use the drug. 🧠

10 Useful Tips and Tricks for Managing Patients with a Sensitive Gag Reflex

Let's be honest, the uvula is one of the most annoying things we have to deal with as dental professionals. It gets in the way and for our more sensitive patients, it's a never-ending trigger for the gag-reflex. Not ideal for either party, really.

We've all known a patient who can't stop gagging while we're trying to treat them. It's not their fault, of course.

And while biology isn't always in our favor, there are a few tips and tricks we can implement for patients with a sensitive gag reflex to ensure that both we and the patients have as pleasant an appointment as possible.

Be patient and understanding

Gag reflexes can be triggered psychologically, physiologically, or through a combination of the two. But one thing is for sure, your patient probably feels embarrassed and agitated that they have a sensitive gag reflex and is likely getting more anxious about it throughout the appointment.

As such, being understanding and patient about the situation will

help put your patient at ease which should go some way to helping the problem (or at the very least, not provoking it further.)

Adjust the chair position

Some patients find that when they are lying down, the gag reflex gets worse. That's because the uvula is in closer contact to the surrounding tissue and muscles, making it more likely for it to be accidentally touched and triggered.

Play around with the chair positions to see if a more upright position helps reduce any involuntary gags. It may help if they can be completely upright, possibly even standing.

If adjusting the chair helps, it's a good idea to make a note in your patients files for next time.

Distract your patient

Having a sensitive gag reflex is uncomfortable, and the dry heaving can be quite painful, too. Luckily for us, our human brains aren't too good at focusing on multiple things at once.

When you need to examine your patient's mouth, distract them by getting them to do things like stand on one leg or lift a hand in the air. Regularly change the position they need to hold to keep them distracted. This usually helps reduce gag reflexes.

Instruct your patient to breathe through their nose

The soft vibrations that go through the mouth as we breath can provoke the gag reflex, especially when the uvula is already being stimulated by dental equipment.

Before you start anything, get your patient to focus on breathing through their nose. Once they've got into a comfortable nose breathing state examination should be much easier.

Get your patient to hum

It might feel awkward but engaging the throat and mouth muscles to hum greatly reduces the body's ability to gag.

Ask your patient to smile

No, we're not trying to ask your patients to pretend to be happy, but smiling, like humming, engages the muscles surrounding the uvula making them much more gag resistant.

Honestly, try it, it's pretty difficult to gag when you're smiling!

Use throat spray

Numbing throat sprays can be very effective at reducing the gag reflex as the uvula and surrounding tissues become far less sensitive.

You can either instruct your patient to bring some with you or keep extra in stock for such occasions.

It might also help to add this as a recommendation for patients on their appointment booking confirmation.

Try salt on the tongue

This trick seems random, but all over the internet, people swear by it, so it must do something, right?!

The theory is that a lot of times, the gag reflex has to do with the body feeling queasy and increasing your uptake of sodium can calm the stomach.

It might be a bit hard to sanitarilly dispense salt to put on the tip of all your patients' tongues, but a salt gargle should suffice.

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Book an appointment for later in the day

Many people find their gag reflex is much worse in the morning. You can tell if that's you if you have to wait a couple of hours in the morning before you can stomach brushing your teeth.

Booking an appointment later in the day can help reduce the likelihood of a sensitive gag reflex.

Use nitrous oxide

Finally, sedation may be necessary for patients with severely sensitive gag reflexes that don't respond to any of the above. It's also a pretty good solution for those suffering from anxiety or white coat syndrome.

Help your patients reduce their gag reflex at their next appointment

Gag reflexes are part and parcel of being a dental professional, but with a little patience and willing, you can help manage these patients with care and kindness.

I hope these tips help you support your patients with sensitive gag reflexes! 🌀

Tips to Make Your Dental Practice Adolescent Friendly

Over the years, dental practices have become synonymous with fear. People come in with expectations of pain, archaic tools, and evil dentists (thanks TV!). And adolescents aren't exempt from this fear.

But making adolescents comfortable coming to the dentist means they'll develop good oral hygiene habits that continue into adulthood, helping to prevent them from dire dental problems in the future.

And that means it's up to us as dental professionals to make the experience positive for our adolescent patients. Here are three ways you can do just that!

1. Create a warm, welcoming environment

Is your dental practice covered in sterile white paint, giving a very clinical, cold feel? If so, it might be time to call up the decorators and change it up. It's obviously essential to keep your practice clean and hygienic, but that doesn't mean it has to be bland and uninviting. Find colours and furniture that gives a warm feel but can be easily cleaned daily to maintain hygiene standards.

Creating a welcoming environment is about more than just your decoration though. Not only should it look welcoming, but it should be welcoming. So what does that mean? It means ensuring all staff members are friendly and sympathetic from the moment any patient walks through the door until the moment they leave. A friendly face can help alleviate stress and put your patients at ease.

2. Consider your practice opening times

Just like working adults, adolescents have a specific schedule they can't change. But unlike their adult counterparts, they can't just ask for the day off or use a holiday day to go for a check-up. And while some schools may be ok with their students being pulled out for dental appointments, they still suffer a loss of vital learning every time they do.

So ensuring you have appointments before and after school hours will help get more teens through your doors for much needed check-ups and treatments. You may even decide to dedicate one afternoon a week exclusively to your adolescent patients.

Additionally, you could partner with local schools in your area to go into schools to perform check-ups on your patients once in a while to minimize the disruption to learning.

3. Show your understanding side

Adolescence is a stressful time. Your body is changing, school is getting harder, you're being pressured from the adults in your life to figure out your career before you've even started, and the impending transition to adulthood seems scary.

All of this stress and turmoil can lead to poor oral hygiene habits including not flossing, drinking fizzy drinks, eating sugary foods, and even going days without brushing!

As a dental professional, it's frustrating when this happens, but try and put yourself in their shoes for a moment. They probably know that what they are doing isn't healthy or helpful but knowing that doesn't make it easy to change.

So instead of scolding your patients (which will almost certainly lead them to avoid dentists in the future) be compassionate and try to meet them halfway. Understand what's troubling them and try to come up with innovative solutions to help them improve their oral health habits that work for them. Would it help to set a reminder on their phone? Can they replace one fizzy drink a week with water? Would they be willing to switch to sparkling water to help wean them off?

The more you show you care about them as a person and not just their teeth, the more they'll trust you and want to keep coming back to see you.

Eventually, this will encourage your patients to keep up with routine follow up appointments which will then give them the best chance at good oral health for many years to come.

Final thoughts

Getting your adolescent patients comfortable with coming to the dentist's office without having to be coaxed or forced by their parents is essential to building a society of adults that practice better oral hygiene habits.

And that all starts with you and the experience you provide for the teenagers entering your office each day.

With these small, yet impactful changes, you can change the misconceptions of a heartless dental practice into a place your patients feel happy to go to. 🌀



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