

Question: What do we do when the phone rings and we're with another patient?

1. When you are in the office, the patient in front of you ALWAYS gets 100% of your attention. If you answer the phone, just to ask them to hold, you've shown the caller, and the patient in front of you that they are not as important as they should be.

2. Crosstrain - EVERYONE on the team should be able to answer the phone and at minimum, schedule a new patient. If you are blocking specific times for new patients and everyone knows your system for serving patients over the phone, this will happen. If you are part of the clinical team and the phone rings more than 2-3 rings, and you're not face-to-face with a patient, grab it!!!

3. Record a specific, enthusiastic message - In the event no one on the team is able to get to the phone because they are all in direct contact with patients, be sure have a specific, enthusiastic message. Change the message every morning and evening -

Message for office hours when you can't get to the phone:

Hi, thank you so much for calling Dr. Brady's office! We are in the office today, DATE, but we are helping another patient right now/in training so that we can serve you best. If you will leave your information, we promise to get back to you within an hour. If you'd like, go check out our website, www.happydentist.com, and join us on facebook for the most up to date info and special offers. If you are a new patient, we can't wait to meet you!

Message for afterhours:

Hi, thank you so much for calling Dr. Brady's office! We are out of the office, but will return on DAY AND TIME. If you are a new patient, we can't wait to meet you! If you'd like to leave your information, we will get back with you first thing tomorrow morning. In the mean time, please feel free to visit our website, www.happydentist.com, or become our friend on Facebook for the most up to date information and special offers. If you have a question about a current appointment, or you have an emergency, please call Dr. Brady at home – 555-555-5555. (this will actually thwart cancellations, as they will not want to call doctor at home)

If you are doing some heavy marketing that will result in higher call volume, you might designate a dedicated phone number just for new patients . In that case, you may want to consider sharing the responsibility of carrying a cell phone after hours – of course you would want to have access to the schedule or at least know when the new patient opportunities are for the following week.