

COVID-19 SURVIVAL GUIDE FOR DENTAL PRACTICES

Best Practices for Planning Productively



GREETINGS-

We understand the difficulty facing the dental industry right now. Covid-19 (coronavirus) is the biggest shock to our health and economic systems in a generation.

While we are all processing and coming to terms with the new reality, it's important that we keep perspective, and remember that it is short-term. Life will continue to begin to return to normal very soon.

The aim of this guide is to help you with simple, digital steps you can take right now to communicate with patients and even **acquire new ones**, even if you are still closed, or opening slowly depending on the phase.

Also, we aim to equip you with the knowledge and actions you need to ensure your appointment book is full when business returns to normal.

To keep things simple we've broken the guide into two parts:

1. What to do to retain patients
2. How to reopen with a full appointment calendar

Each part has a section covering the primary online channels:

- Your website
- Google
- Facebook/Instagram
- Email/SMS



We're here to help if you need, just email mann@deynoodtmarketing.com or call 504.522.4377. We're available to help you navigate this time safely and successfully.

While you are closed



Your Website

It's likely that your website is still the first place that patients, past, present and future will visit to see your current operating status.

It's essential therefore that you have a clear message on your website homepage, that includes:

1. Your updated opening hours - or if closed a statement to that effect
2. Show contact information for emergency cases
3. Show your Covid-19 hygiene processes for emergency cases

This should be a very simple task for your website developer or administrator.

A nice way to make sure that everyone sees your message is to add a popup such as the example below:



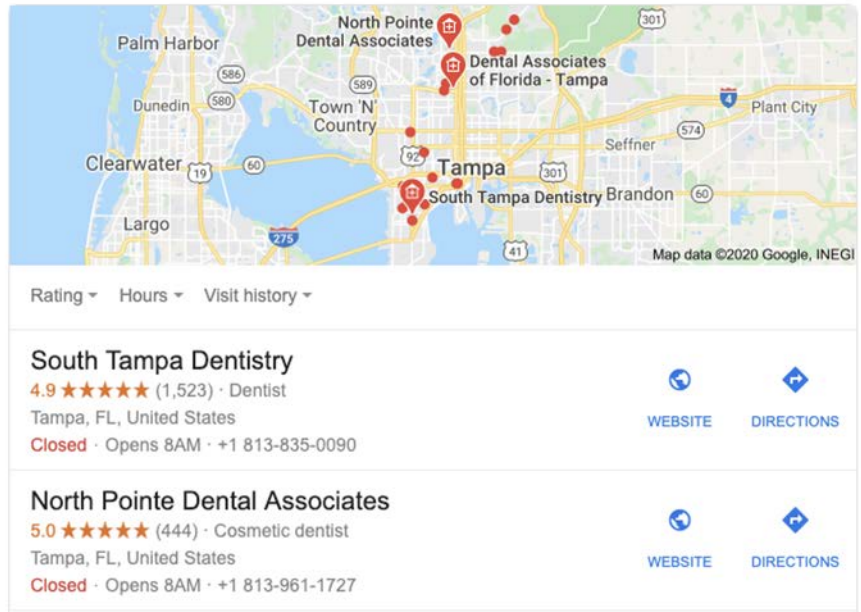
A popup like this should be easy to generate and can be a great attention grabber on both mobile and desktop devices. If you don't have the ability to create one internally, just hit reply and we can get one created for you.



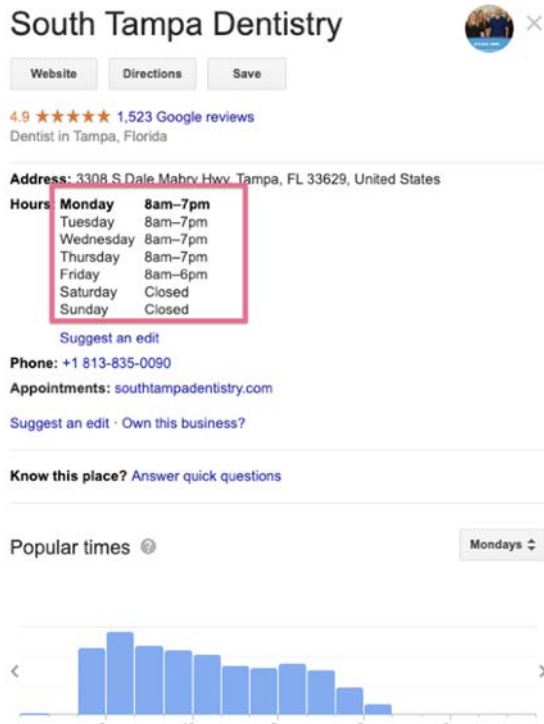


Your Google My Business Listing

Anybody searching for you is likely to see your Google My Business Listing, like the example here:



Make sure that yours is up to date. These listings are particularly prominent on mobile devices and some people will use this information rather than visit your website so it needs to be up to date.



Also, on this listing you have the opportunity to add longer messages that are shown below the reviews section. Make sure that you update this with the same information as your website:

1. Your updated opening hours - or if closed a statement to that effect
2. Show contact information for emergency cases
3. Show your covid-19 hygiene processes for emergency cases



Note - if you haven't claimed your GMB listing - then you should do so immediately. To start the process, Google search for your own business. Go to Google maps and you should find your business. When you do, click the listing and then click the "Own this business" link in the image below.



5.0 ★★★★★ 444 Google reviews

Cosmetic dentist in the Lake Magdalene, Florida

Address: 801 W Fletcher Ave, Tampa, FL 33612, United States

Hours: **Closed** · Opens 8AM ▾

Phone: +1 813-961-1727

Appointments: northpointedental.com

[Suggest an edit](#) · [Own this business?](#)





Google Ads

If you have been running Google Ads prior to the pandemic, then you may have chosen to pause them at this point. That makes good sense if you cannot serve patients, right now, but if you are able to take emergency cases, then you have a very good opportunity to generate new patients today.

In most states, it's perfectly within your rights to offer emergency treatment. A treatment is considered "emergency" if the patient is in pain, so for example, a cavity, an infection, broken tooth can all be treated.

What's more, patients are willing to pay fees of \$1,800 or more just for you to be willing to see them.

Typically, in Google, emergency treatments account for approximately 7% of dentist related searches on any given day. so there is an opportunity there for you to win new patients and earn additional income at a time when people need you most and their regular dentist may not be open.

To reach these patients a small, inexpensive Google ads campaign is the fastest most efficient way.

The key to making sure the campaign is inexpensive is to only show ads for those search terms that generate patient inquiries.

Last year, we analyzed 232 dental campaigns collectively spending \$56,048 on emergency dental ads. Of these, ads were shown to users searching for 2,788 unique search terms. Of the 2,788 unique search terms only 232, led to a patient inquiry.

2,556 search terms costing \$25,227 resulted in no inquiries at all.

Therefore, to maximize the effectiveness of your campaign, we recommend you spend on only the 8% of search terms that generated inquiries. Within your own Google Ads account, you should see the terms that previously generated inquiries for you. If you would like help to target all the 232 terms as cost-effectively as possible just hit reply to my email or call 504.522.4377



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Facebook

Use your Facebook page to communicate with your existing patients. Update them on your status and add emergency procedures. Here's a great example of a closure message from a dentist in Canada:



Important:

You might not know that Facebook does not automatically show your posts to everyone who has liked your page.

To make sure you reach more of your customers you will need to use Facebook ads. There are several ways to do this:

Boosted post

The simplest way to reach your patients is to “boost your post” with the closure information. To do this you need to be an Administrator of your Facebook page.

To check if you have the option to do this. First, go to the page for your practice in Facebook.

Then, scroll down to find the post and if you have the correct access you'll see a “Boost Post” button as highlighted below. Click the button and follow the steps, if you would prefer - we can help.

Custom audience

The best way to reach your patients is to show them ads using a custom audience. You can do this by uploading a list of patient email addresses to Facebook, where they will be matched with Facebook accounts and ads shown to matching users.

This method is a little more complicated and you might want to get help to do it properly. It can be done very inexpensively.



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Instagram

You can also share your updates on Instagram. Again this is free, however, as with Facebook, you will reach more of your patients with a simple ad. You realistically will not reach most of your patients relying solely on Instagram organic reach.

As Instagram is part of Facebook, when creating your Facebook ad you can easily include Instagram with little extra effort.

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Email

Don't forget to email your patient list. But bear in mind that email open rates are often only around 20% so you should email multiple times and use in conjunction with other methods. If you don't have the capability to do this within your practice management system, or you need help, again, we'd be happy to help you with this.

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SMS

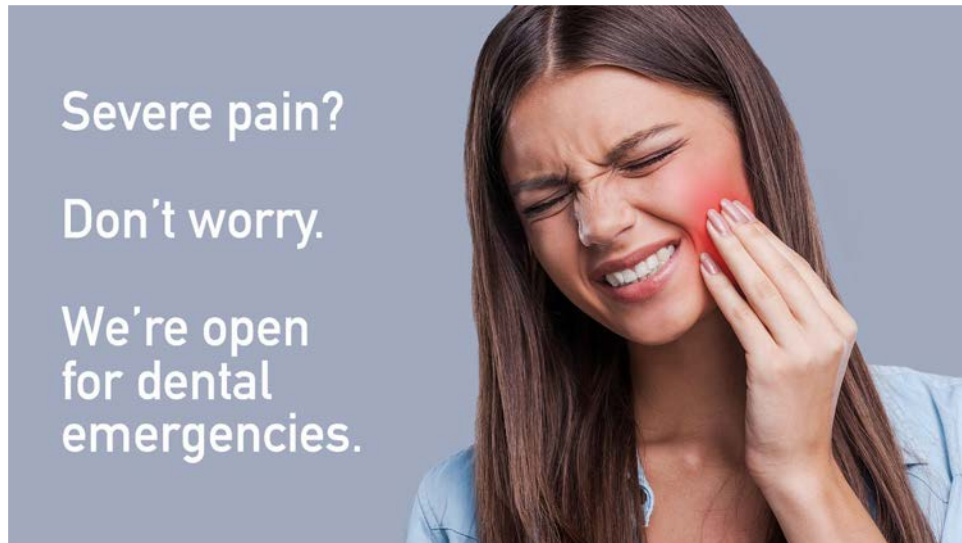
Great for simple messages and updates. Very inexpensive and easy to do just make sure that you have permission to message your patients.



2 Sample Messages For Facebook, Instagram, Email & SMS

Feel free to use this sample images, and copy anywhere you'd like!

1. Still Open for Emergencies



“All of us at @dentistcompanynamehere are taking the necessary precautions to keep our staff and patients safe while ensuring no patient in severe pain feels abandoned! With that said, our office is currently open for dental emergencies ONLY. Not sure what constitutes an emergency? Check out this page on our website: linkhere.com and please call our office to make an appointment if needed.”



2. General COVID-19 Update

“The health and safety of our patients and employees is our highest priority. Our office is currently only open for emergency dental procedures and appointments. If you have a non emergency appointment, we will be contacting you to reschedule it.

We understand that we provide an essential service to our community, even in times of crisis. Please like our Facebook page to stay up to date on the latest changes with our practice. Thank you!”



Getting ready to reopen

In the near-future, it will be time to prepare to reopen and when you think that time is close, it is best to prepare with a plan. Here's our x step plan to a fully-booked reopening

1

Contact your cancelled patients

Without wishing to state the obvious, contact your cancelled appointments using all available channels, email, phone and SMS message. You might also want to use Facebook Messenger or even WhatsApp. Now is a great time to meet your patients on their terms.

2

Contact your other patients

There is likely pent-up demand from your patients who didn't have an appointment scheduled. As with your cancelled patients, contact them directly on phone, email and SMS.

3

Tell your community

Update your website messaging

Change your Corona-closure message to a "we're opening back up message", at least a week in advance.

Google My Business

Revert the opening hours changes from the first section and also any posts that you made.

Google Ads

Run a display based campaign in targeting your local area. This simple campaign will show banner ads on popular websites such as news media and is very inexpensive to run.

You should also start search campaigns for your primary services. As we described early, it's extremely important that you make this as cost-effective as possible. To do this, make sure that as far as possible you are only targeting search terms that have proven to generate inquiries for dental practices like yours.



We've analyzed over \$1m in dental ad spend in the last year and have a unique, deep understanding of this data. Look at the table below to see how much waste there is in Google Ads spend today.

	Total search terms	Converting search terms	% of total that convert
GENERAL	68090	2370	3%
IMPLANTS	20011	508	3%
BRACES	5678	115	2%
INVISALIGN	3451	88	3%
EMERGENCY	2788	232	8%
ORTHO	1176	43	4%
VENEERS	1123	25	2%
WHITENING	1067	19	2%
CHILD	473	10	2%

If you want to restart your practice using the power of hyper-efficient Google Ads campaigns, just hit reply.

Facebook

Make sure you put several - "We're reopening" posts out as Facebook reach is very time-limited (you try finding something you saw 24 hours ago).

This should definitely be supplemented by a simple, local ads campaign. You can do this using the Facebook ads campaigns in the previous section.



And finally

For extra credit, you can also replicate your efforts by reposting your updates on LinkedIn and Twitter. We haven't covered them in detail as they are relatively minority platforms with far less patient reach than Google and Facebook, but there are lots of good online resources available.



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Checklist

-  Update your website with your current status using our example
-  Use our social posts to communicate to patients
-  If you can service emergency patients run a small Google Ads and Facebook campaign to maximize patient opportunities
-  Prepare your re-opening plan with all media channels
-  Ask for help - we're available and ready to help with anything you need.

If you need anything, please contact us at one of the options below.



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