

PATIENT REACTIVATION & RECALL

"Reactivation" is for patients whom you haven't seen in three months or longer. It may seem that you are never going to see them again, but overall that's not true. Plenty of these people need care -- even if they have gone elsewhere in the meantime. Some will be disenchanted with their new doctor. Some will now realize they should come in for a visit, but have put it off.

Compose a one to two-page letter or use the following sample. Be very specific as to why it is important to come in now and what can happen to them if they don't. The more specific the possible outcome, the more response you'll get. Spell out what can happen from degenerative spinal disease. Since the effect of unchecked spinal degeneration is the most important part of the strategy, tell them! Pull few punches. (Ethics: One assumes here that you don't contact anyone whom you don't truly believe may need to come in.)

Usually when doctors reactivate by mail, they merely make an "offer". Tell your patients why they need to come back and the response rate will be much greater. When you add an "offer" on a separate enclosure, it pumps up the response even more. Is an offer necessary? No, but in middle to lower socio-economic markets, it helps. However, put most of your effort into the "why."

If your software can sort by diagnosis or type of case, you can write specific letters to each type of patient, rather than a more generic -- and less responsive -- one. If you can't sort, mail the generic one anyway. The possibilities are too big not to.

If you don't have a computer, put your past files, sorted by condition, on a mailing list at a computer service bureau or purchase "My Mail List" software at your local office supply store. You should have file labels anyway to mail to your patient base quarterly for referrals and promotions. Mail to all those patients who should be seen but haven't been in the last three months. Mark on the envelope "Address Correction Requested." This cleans your list of the deceased or moved patients, which reduces your costs for future mailings.

SAMPLE REACTIVATION LETTER ON LETTERHEAD

Dear Patient and Friend,

I've been thinking about you! I realized I haven't seen you lately, and so I reviewed your file and looked at your last x-ray. I am concerned that based on your past history, you might be suffering the effects of spinal degeneration without being aware of it. The first effect of spinal degeneration is that the nerve that supplies the area stops performing its normal function. This means that your nerve is unable to alert you to a problem that is potentially developing. It would be like cutting the wire to your fire alarm when your house is on fire. The alarm can't warn you of the fire in time to get out of the house!

Another sign of spinal degeneration is the loss of flexibility. You lose flexibility without even being aware of it. You begin to turn with your shoulders instead of using your neck. You lift with your back instead of bending your knees. You should have enough flexibility to enjoy your life. This means you should be able to get out of bed in the morning without feeling stiff or sore. It means that you can do the things you enjoy in your free time. You should be flexible enough to exercise and enjoy your hobbies and leisure time including sitting to watch your favorite television program without being stiff when you get up.

The most serious effect of spinal degeneration is a loss of vitality. You should feel healthy! You should have a sense of wellness and energy. You should be able to get out of bed ready to go at least six out of seven days a week. When your spine begins to degenerate your nervous and immune systems do not function normally. You feel that something isn't right, but just can't put your finger on it. You feel tense and stressed-out. You wake up tired and "poop" out before the day is done.

I have set aside [Month] as "Welcome Back to Chiropractic Month". Do yourself a favor and call our office to schedule a visit. I will perform a Back to Chiropractic adjustment at no cost. This visit has a normal value of up to \$40.00, and is yours absolutely FREE during the month of [Month]. It's my way of encouraging you to get back on track and to avoid the consequences of spinal degeneration. Please bring the enclosed Back to Chiropractic Health Pass with you when you come to the office. I look forward to seeing you again soon!

With personal regards,

Dr. _____

P.S.: Call our office at 123-123-1234 today. Our receptionist will be happy to schedule a time that is convenient for you. I've enclosed a Back to Chiropractic Health Pass good for a free adjustment.

SAMPLE HEALTH PASS ENCLOSED IN MAILING

BACK TO CHIROPRACTIC HEALTH PASS

\$40.00 VALUE

This certificate entitles you to a Chiropractic
Adjustment at our office
At **NO CHARGE**

Please phone our office in advance to schedule your appointment.
This Health Pass may be used through [Date].
It is not transferable and may not be applied to co existing balance.
Doctor's Name, Phone, Address

HOW TO EXTEND A GOOD THING:

Repetition works, and phone communication is more powerful than mail. Hire a college student to work between five and nine at night phoning those who needed to come in but hadn't responded to the mail. Reading from a script, (see enclosed sample), the caller tells the patient that the doctor had asked the caller to phone Tell the patient why they need to come in, and what could happen if they don't. The caller then asks for the appointment. Mail first because it costs less than phoning. Then phone those who don't respond to the mail.

SAMPLE REACTIVATION PHONE SCRIPT:

"Hello this is (Name) calling from Dr. [Name]'s office. I'm calling to see if you received the note doctor sent you."

IF YES: "Great! Then you already know that Dr. [Name] has set aside [Month] as "Welcome Back to Chiropractic Month" During the month of [Month] s/he will give you a Back to Chiropractic adjustment at no charge. This visit has a normal value of \$40.00, and is yours absolutely FREE during the month of [Month]. It's our way of encouraging you to get back on track and to avoid the consequences of spinal degeneration. On what day would you like to schedule your visit? (Schedule visit) I look forward to seeing you day, date, time!

IF NO: "That's OK, I can tell you what it was about. The doctor wrote you because s/he updating his files and was concerned that s/he hadn't seen you in quite a while. Dr. [Name] has set aside [Month] as "Welcome Back to Chiropractic Month". During the month of [Month] s/he will give you a Back to Chiropractic adjustment at no charge. This visit has a normal value of \$40.00, and is yours absolutely FREE during the month of [Month]. It's our way of encouraging you to get back on track and to avoid the consequences of spinal degeneration. On what day would you like to schedule your visit? (Schedule visit) I look forward to seeing you day, date, time!

SAMPLE RECALL LETTER

Dear Friend,

WE MISS YOU--WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN?

We've been thinking about you wondering why we haven't seen you lately. The last time you were in you had relatively extensive treatment done. I reviewed your file and looked at your last x-ray.

Frankly, for all the beneficial treatment that you've paid so much for, we're worried because based on your symptoms, it's highly unlikely that you haven't had some problem in the last few years! We're concerned that you might be suffering needlessly in pain.

Thus, we're writing you for two reasons. First, if you have a problem and are avoiding coming back because you can't afford it, we can work out some arrangement.

Second, if you didn't enjoy our method of chiropractic to begin with, or you found our manner for any reason offensive or unpleasurable, we would like to talk with you about it. Our only intent is to give you effective and comfortable treatment.

WE WANT YOU BACK!

Do us a favor, please. Call our office and ask for Carol. She's our assistant. Please tell her what day you want to come into the office. To give you the most affordable service, we'll try to lower the cost of your examination.

We can't give it to you for free because of professional constraints, but we'll do the next best thing. We'll pay the cost of your spinal examination and all but \$5 of your x-rays--a \$275 value!

Warmly,

Dr. _____
Chiropractor

SAMPLE RECALL TELEPHONE SCRIPT

Hello Bob. My name is ___ and I am calling for Dr. [Name] from the [Name] Chiropractic Center. I'm his assistant. Do you have a minute?

Bob, do you remember the last time you saw Dr. [Name]?

Do you realize Bob, it's been _____ months since your last visit and the doctor is concerned about you. S/he knows that you have a problem that s/he has helped you with in the past and s/he feels there's a good chance that you might be in pain right now.

The doctor feels that you haven't come in for one of three reasons:

1. S/He knows that possibly you've been afraid, maybe your last adjustment was uncomfortable, or you feel you're in too much pain to get an adjustment.
2. Or, maybe with this time of year with the holidays approaching, you feel you can't afford it.
3. Or, maybe you've found another chiropractor that you're happy with.

Would you say that any of these reasons have kept you away from our office?

Are you in pain right now?

If no, wonderful, let's keep it that way.

Dr. [Name] is probably the most flexible compassionate guy you'll ever deal with. So, s/he's authorized me to ask you to come in. In fact, s/he will pay for your examination and x-rays him/herself!

Saturday, [Date] has been set aside as Welcome Back to Chiropractic Day and, if you are interested, I am cleared to schedule a visit for you then or for another day if that would be more convenient. What time would be best for you?