

HOW TO COMBAT THE WAITING GAME

By Melissa Romanelli

Keep Your Patients Happy While They Wait

No one likes to wait. Everyone has too much on their plate, and time is a precious commodity. But, there are always times when situations put your office behind schedules, and patients must wait for their appointment.

While you can manage the processes in the office to help reduce waiting times, you can also do things within your reception area to reduce the stress of waiting. Here are some helpful hints:

- Ensure that the reception area provides a variety of interesting reading material that will help inform patients on health related issues. Change the selection from time to time to keep information fresh for patients who have frequent, recurring visits.
- Provide informative video information for patients to be both entertained and informed.
- Ensure that the waiting room provides adequate space and flow to meet the special needs of your patients. Ensure that there is wheel chair access and “parking” space if you have a largely handicapped patient base.
- Establish a children’s area if your patients often bring their children (of if your patients are children). The more you can keep the children quiet and entertained, the happier all the waiting patients will be. Lego’s, books, and puzzles can provide quiet entertainment.
- Establish monthly themes based upon specific health topics. These themes will allow you to target specific issues and allow you to create excitement in the office.

Even for the most health conscious of people, going to the doctor’s office is not the most fun event in their day. Keeping on schedule, and providing distractions when the office occasionally falls behind, is the best way to maintain patient retention and compliance.