

YOUR VIEW

compiled by **Julie Ferry**

What most **irritates** you about **patients**?



Marion Gray

“...my patients consistently arrive ten minutes late for appointments.”

Technician

Neil Valder, technician at the orthodontic laboratory, Eastman Dental Hospital, London

“The most irritating thing is when patients don’t turn up for appointments. We are a small laboratory and we cover lots of operators. We are working to very tight deadlines and always get our work finished on time. It costs us a lot of money when patients don’t turn up to get their appliances fitted. Over the course of a year it can run into thousands of pounds. We literally have boxes and boxes of appliances in our storeroom that are waiting to be fitted. So, that is definitely my main bug bear.”

Hygienist

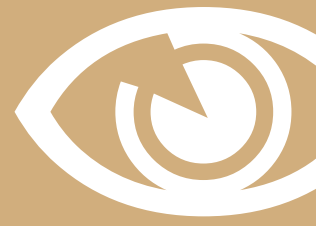
Marion Gray, hygienist at several practices and tutor in Northern Ireland

“The main thing for me is when my patients consistently arrive ten minutes late for appointments. I understand that they can be late occasionally, for whatever reason, but I find that a few of my three-month patients regularly turn up late. I am very thorough in my job and get great job satisfaction out of doing a thorough scaling of the mouth. So for me to only be able to do a lower three to three scaling is not good enough. I also don’t like keeping my next patient waiting. My book is quite tight and I have a 15-20 minute slot for each patient so I can end up running ten minutes late for the whole day.”

Dental nurse

Clare Edwards, dental nurse at Lavender Close Dental Practice in Kent

“What most irritates me about patients is their inability to take full advantage of the services and care that we offer. We all really want patients to get the best out of their treatment when they come to the practice. For example, if we give them oral hygiene advice and then they don’t fully take it on board that can be a little frustrating.”



Helen Ferns

“Patients often complain to us when their dentist is running late – they will really have a go at us.”

Receptionist

Margaret Leppard, receptionist at Kingsclear Dental Practice in Alton, Hampshire

“Patients often complain to us when their dentist is running late – they will really have a go at us. However as soon as they get upstairs and into the surgery they never say a word to the dentist and are all sweetness and light. Also, it can be irritating when patients cancel appointments at short notice and then complain terribly if you can’t find them another appointment. They seem to think that we can wave a magic wand and find another hour in the day. Both of those are things that can be very difficult for a receptionist.”

Practice Manager

Helen Ferns, practice manager at Woodseats Dental Care, Sheffield

“There are several funny things that patients do that I can think of. First, we find that patients come in just before they are due to go on holiday and want the dentist to take a look at them. They may have just had a check up but they want to have another one just in case. That’s a classic. Another one is when the patient is in the chair and the dentist will ask if they are having any problems. There will be a long pause and then the patient will ask if they are talking to them. We just tend to look at each other and smile. They are things that regularly seem to happen.”

Therapist

Kate Oakes is Secretary for the British Association of Dental Therapists

“What most irritates me about patients is when they attend for a filling appointment having already had dietary advice, and have a can of coke or packet of sweets in their hand.”



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