

DocTalk

A QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER FOR
PARTICIPATING DENTISTS AND THEIR STAFF
FROM **Dental Health Services**

Be *the* Patient

Handshakes, Sensitivity Boost, and Doctor-Patient Rapport

The little details make a BIG difference...

Patients look to establish a personal relationship with their doctors. Simple actions such as shaking hands and greeting patients by their first name allow patients to feel important.

“The first few moments of a medical encounter are critical to establishing a rapport, making the patient feel comfortable and setting the tone of the interview (appointment),” wrote a team at Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine in Chicago.*

This team surveyed 415 adults about their expectations and preferences for being greeted by doctors and found:

- Just over 78% wanted doctors to shake their hands



- More than half wanted their first names used during greetings, and nearly a quarter wanted doctors to use both their first and last names
- Just over 56% of patients wanted doctors to introduce themselves using first and last names, 32.5% wanted doctors to use their last name, and about 7% wanted doctors to use their first name

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Be featured in our next DockTalk newsletter!

Just submit a bolt of wisdom about how you and your office staff uniquely make your patients happy. Also, let us know what topics you'd like to see in the future—if your topic is used, we will highlight you and your dental office in that issue and you can look forward to receiving a special reward from Dental Health Services delivered to your office. A prepaid return envelope has been included for your convenience.

QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS? CONTACT US!

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The researchers also video-taped 123 new patient visits with 19 different doctors. They found that:

- Doctors and patients shook hands about 83% of the time
- In over half of the visits, doctors did not mention patients' names at all
- Doctors used their first and last names when introducing themselves in 58.8% of the meetings, and did not introduce themselves at all in about 11% of the visits

“Physicians should be encouraged to shake hands with patients but remain sensitive to non verbal clues that might indicate whether patients are open to this behavior,” the study researchers wrote.

“Given the diversity of opinion regarding the use of names, coupled with national patient safety recommendations concerning patient identification, we suggest that physicians initially use patients' first and last names.”

We move through life encountering new situations and people that require us to adapt to these environments—wouldn't *you* want to be greeted with a smile and a personal greeting if *you* were in this situation? The little details make a BIG difference.

**The study data is published in the June 11 issue of the Journal Archives of Internal Medicine.*

These tips can be used by everyone in your office, from receptionists to treatment coordinators, assistants, hygienists, and dentists.

Your Patients Are Talking

To all of our participating dental offices: **thank you!** As the comments below show, our members recognize and appreciate the excellent care you continue to provide them!

"All the offices look new, modern and clean, the staff are VERY friendly and efficient!"

Elizabeth N. Bettis
Very satisfied plan member

"I am just so grateful to receive such excellent care and be able to afford it. Thank you so much!"

Patricia A. Hewkin
Satisfied plan member

"Thank you. I went almost 10 years without any dental coverage—now I am able to see my dentist regularly! I actually look forward to the visits.

Kimberly R. Plummer
Happy plan member

How can we help you?

Do you have questions regarding Dental Health Services' **Quality Assurance Program** or any other services we provide?

Your Service Specialist is available to answer all of your questions!



800.223.4347 saves you time — call today!

Your time is valuable. To help you work as efficiently as possible, call Dental Health Services' toll-free member eligibility hotline at **800.223.4347** the next time you need verification. You will save time by gaining immediate and direct access to our member database on this fully automated line. **800.223.4347** is also the best way to receive faxed eligibility confirmation, as well as member-specific plan information—all you need is your provider identification number. Should you need additional assistance, Service Specialists are also available 8am to 5pm, Monday through Friday, to answer all of your questions.