

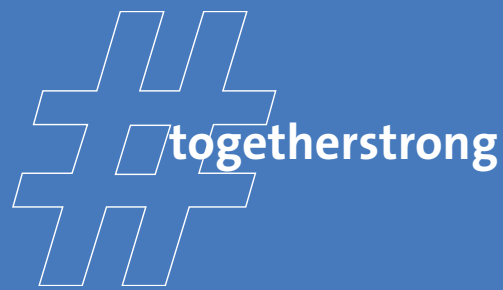


THE COMING BACK OF THE DENTAL PRACTICE

#TOGETHERSTRONG

2020





#TogetherStrong

Unexpected down time can be both a blessing and a curse. Of course, the impact of a dental practice closing on patients, staff and the business cannot be underestimated. The disruption to both patient care and professional income could have a significant effect on the individuals involved. However, the flip side is that many people who work in all corners of the dental industry suddenly have time to concentrate on areas that they otherwise wouldn't have been able to.

Utilising this down time isn't just about spending more valuable hours with immediate family and partners – although this is one of the major silver linings that COVID-19 has brought to some households. It is also a chance to work on your business and on your career.

Across the Straumann Group, we remain as committed as ever to supporting our customers. As such, we have put our heads together and come up with some ideas about how you could make the most of any free hours you may now have. We understand that every practice and professional is different, so we have taken a general approach and hope that we can offer some inspiration for everyone. The following are some suggestions and advice from our teams regarding what you can do and how we can help you during this challenging time.



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Make down time positive and productive

Review and optimise your practice management

Monitoring performance is a crucial part of any successful business. For principals and practice managers in busy dental practices, it can be difficult to fit in such a task around many other commitments that take priority in normal circumstances. For example, patient care, compliance, stock control, staff queries and equipment maintenance may be more pressing daily. The down time you now have if your practice is closed provides a perfect opportunity to tap into the massive potential that your performance data holds.

Modern practice management software allows you to download reports on the current state of your business. You'll be able to review an array of different key performance indicators (KPIs), enabling you to better understand where your business is at right now. This information also provides an opportunity to identify areas that could be improved, or to prepare for a more focused and efficient future when things get back to normal. Why not check:

- Treatment trends among existing patients.
- The most common channels by which new patients find you.
- Which private treatment plans are outstanding.
- Average diary occupancy for each provider in the practice.
- Treatments or services that bring in the most revenue for the practice.
- Conversion rates from patient enquiry to treatment plan to treatment acceptance.
- Private versus NHS treatment provided.
- Types of treatments most often referred on to other practices and how many treatments this constitutes.

There are many ways to use this information. It might help shape the development of the business in terms of expanding or concentrating the services offered. The evaluation could also demonstrate key treatments to market at certain times of the year in order to maximise on demand.

Your database is a gold mine – if you're not using it, then you're sitting on a huge amount of wasted potential. Why not utilise this down time to use your data to help strengthen your business and better prepare it for the future?





Training

As many practices have already realised, this is a good time to consider in-house training and get the whole team up-to-date with their CPD. This can cover everything from compliance and core CPD topics, to implants, restorative dentistry or orthodontics. Many online learning platforms offer high-quality education to all members of the team to access from the comfort and safety of their own homes.

It is also important to consider training in non-clinical areas that might otherwise receive less attention. For instance, could you or your team benefit from training or support with regards to communication skills to become more confident in 'selling' to patients? Alternatively, are there ways to help streamline the administrative workflow when you go back to normal that you could research now? Ultimately, the goal is to help non-clinical staff support the patient journey and help ensure their experience is optimised every time.

There are many free webinars available right now, with several training and product providers offering educational support to their customers. Taking half an hour or an hour out, a couple of times a week, to watch some of these will help you stay up-to-date with the latest in the profession. It also keeps you in safe contact with like-minded professionals who will share many similar concerns and have many of the same questions as you do. Check out the Straumann Group webinar platforms:

Watch it live:



straumann.us/webinars
straumann.ca/webinars
neodent.us/webinars
neodent.ca/webinars

Watch it again:



straumann.us/ondemand
straumann.ca/ondemand
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neodent.ca/ondemand



Research the market

We all know how quickly the dental profession evolves, with new technologies and innovative products reaching the market all the time. When was the last time you had a few hours to do some thorough research into any new solutions that could enhance your workflow and your patients' experiences?

To be clear, this is not simply about cutting costs – although many practices will understandably be more financially conscious than they were before the COVID-19 outbreak. Rather, it's more about maximizing efficiencies, without any compromises to the quality of patient care.

Be sure to check out:

- Artificial intelligence (AI) technology. This could offer a way for you to maximise efficiencies once we're all back up and running.
- Patient demographic. What treatments and services are patients in your local area most interested in?
- What your competitors are offering and how you measure up against them. Consider what you can do to distinguish yourself from them.
- Finance options for patients, especially if you don't currently offer any payment plans. This could go a long way to making dental treatment more accessible to people who have less disposable income following the COVID-19 pandemic.

DenToGo™

In times like these, we start to understand how important it is to be near one another and to keep in touch with one another. With DenToGo, you can be there for your patients even when you can't be there with them. Monitor your patients' conditions, conduct virtual appointments, and keep in touch with those patients who need your attention, all from home. Remind your patients that you care, and that you'll still be here when it's safe to be together again.

Communicate and engage

Staying in touch is key to everyone's mental and general health, for as long as social distancing lasts. Especially for those who live alone, prolonged isolation could have a considerable impact on their wellbeing. Dental professionals can help with this.

A simple phone call to some of your most vulnerable patients to see if they are OK could make an enormous difference to them. It gives them someone to talk to, if only for a few minutes, breaking the monotony of isolation that they have likely experienced for several weeks now. It is also something they will value and remember beyond the current situation, likely telling their family and friends. We all know how important word-of-mouth marketing is, which will be invaluable when the practice is open again, giving you a return on the time you spend calling them now.

Beyond this, there are many other opportunities to engage with patients and continue communicating good oral health messages. The digital world today provides the perfect platform from which to reach so many people, all from the safety of your sofa. Indeed, digital channels have already proven hugely advantageous throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, offering all generations a means of communicating with friends, family and colleagues outside their household.

So, why not use digital platforms to communicate with your patients? You and your colleagues could create short videos to post on social media designed to educate the general public and address key dental topics. They might be focused on treatment areas or oral health. This is also a great way of providing some educational support for the thousands of children that are being home schooled right now.

You could give a grateful parent half an hour off by creating a light and engaging video for young patients to watch.

Teach them how to brush their teeth properly, or the importance of a healthy diet. Just keep it simple and fun. We have all had time to reflect and realise just how much we take things for granted – it really is the small things that make the biggest difference.





Further still, if you have a live chat feature on your website, this is another digital means of communication with existing and potential patients. Just like you, many of them will be sitting at home with a little extra time on their hands. If they choose to investigate the dental treatment they have been considering for some time, having a member of the team on hand to answer questions via live chat is important. If there's no answer, what's to say that a patient wouldn't go to the website of another practice instead? To keep it practical, team members could do a day a week or take morning/afternoon shifts.

Maintain momentum where you can

Obviously, you can't perform 'normal' consultations right now, but there may be things you can do remotely. Just as digital channels support communication, they also offer a method by which to extend your services. For example, do you have any patients who expressed interest in orthodontics (identified from your earlier review of the database), who you could offer an online consultation to? You can still answer questions and explain the treatment procedure, meaning patients will be more committed to treatment when they're able to attend the practice for their comprehensive assessment. As it seems that many consumers are using their down time to shop online, advertise your free consultations to bring them to the website. The sessions could then be performed via an array of free platforms, including Skype, Zoom, Teams or any other program you prefer.

There is also the idea of offering 'oral MOTs'. A fresh approach to providing a dental service, this might involve phone calls or online appointments where you simply discuss general oral health advice and talk to patients about any concerns they have. This is a great way of strengthening practitioner-patient relationships while also helping to maintain people's oral health during lockdown and beyond.

Now, we can't talk about digital services without mentioning social media. What had already become a hugely influential platform is now bigger than ever. This down time could therefore be a chance to update your accounts and offer up-to-the-minute dental hygiene advice and support to patients. You could:

- Share details and updates regarding COVID-19, providing patients with a reliable source of information.
- Focus on positive and feel-good messages or games/quizzes to bring a little cheer to patients who might be struggling.
- Offer time slots for live questions about dental health.
- Promote Facebook Messenger as a way for the general public to contact you.
- Share photos of the team from home to maintain the personal touch and show that everyone's in it together.
- Showcase the skills of your team with before and after case photos.

Future-proof your business/career

While we hope that we never face another situation like the COVID-19 pandemic, it is important that we learn from the experience. Has your continuity plan remained relevant and effective in recent months? Perhaps there are a few tweaks or additions you could make to better protect your staff and your business should something like this happen again in the future?

As part of this, a damage assessment would be a very worthwhile exercise. It's important that you know what shape your business is in and exactly how much of an impact the pandemic has had. It's also vital to think about what measures might be necessary should the current situation last longer than expected – what can you do to limit further damage to the business? This might involve lay offs, putting employees on furlough if you haven't already, reducing the team permanently and looking for new ways to boost cashflow or improve financial efficiencies. Support from external sources may also be advantageous, such as training or advice from a business coach. Finally, consider if there is anything you could implement to reduce the impact of any future pandemics.

Going back to your original business plan and mission statement will be key. See if anything needs updating or tweaking to reflect the practice today, or if there are more important areas you wish to focus on going forward. In other words, you can use this time of reflection to future-proof your business.



GOING BACK

Many people are very much looking forward to getting back to normal life. The light at the end of the tunnel gives us back our freedom of movement and enables us to catch up properly with friends, family members and colleagues who we haven't seen in person for quite some time.

To get back to normal with a bang, there are a few things we think could help to prepare you, your team and your practice:

- **Invest in a Treatment Coordinator** role if you haven't already – they will do wonders regarding the organization of your patients and treatment schedules when the practice is up and running.
- **Act on what you found** when reviewing your practice performance reports and database. Patients with open treatment plans should be contacted; marketing should be targeted in areas identified as popular; demonstrations for any new technology or equipment you researched should be booked; successful online patient consultations should be followed up with an in-person consultation to create a treatment plan. Any inefficiencies found must also be rectified to ensure your practice can hit the ground running.
- **Train staff** on how they should respond to any questions from patients about COVID-19 in terms of infection control, PPE etc. If they know what to say and offer knowledgeable, standardised answers, patients are more likely to feel reassured. It might also be beneficial to appoint a lead to support any particularly anxious patients – they need to be appropriately trained for this role too and might be the Treatment Coordinator, for example. In addition, clinical staff need to be aware of any changes to daily routines, while non-clinical staff should appreciate the need to be hot on the phones and email in order to not miss any opportunities.



Dentist

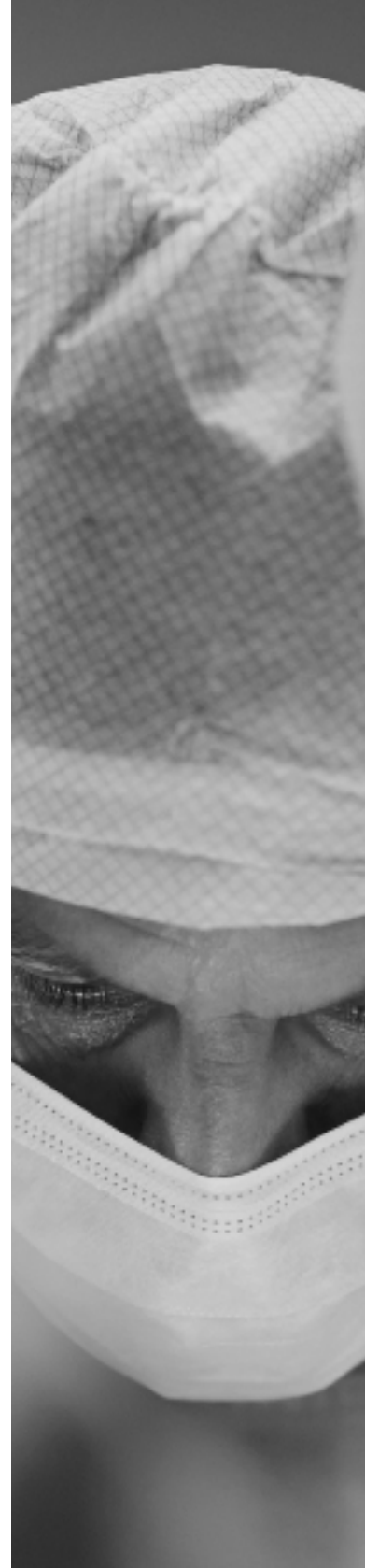


Auxiliary
Staff



Patients

- **Contact patients** who had to postpone appointments to get them booked in. It's best to do this by telephone with a trained member of staff and then email those you can't reach.
- **Contact your referring practices** to let them know when you will be back in business and see how they're doing. Don't forget to thank them for their continued support. You could also contact practices who haven't referred to you to inform them of how you could support them when you're open.
- **Have a meeting with staff and colleagues** to discuss effects of COVID-19 on them, your patients and the business. This will provide an opportunity for them to ask questions or air concerns, and the collective group can better prepare to deliver the support patients may need.
- **Organize a free treatment consultation event** – for example, for orthodontics or implants – to attract new patients.
- **Book lunch and learns** for the team in relevant treatment areas to give them a refresher and motivate them to get started again.
- **Diary zoning** will be key for an efficient appointment schedule once you're up and running. Zoning time periods for general check-ups, orthodontic/implant consultations, cosmetic dentistry and family appointments, for example, will help the whole team manage their time effectively.
- **Re-engage with patients** who haven't attended the practice for 12 months or more, either by email or letter. They might be more conscious of their health and wellbeing after their own time of reflection and be interested in seeking support for their dental hygiene.
- **Get into the right frame of mind.** It has been and may continue to be a challenging time for many people around the world. When the time comes to get back to normal, it's important to have a positive attitude and a player-learner mindset. We all need to establish a way forward and work together to get our profession back up and running.



Patients and health care workers should avoid touching their eyes, nose, and mouth if their hands are unwashed.

Effective radius of sprays generated in a dental treatment

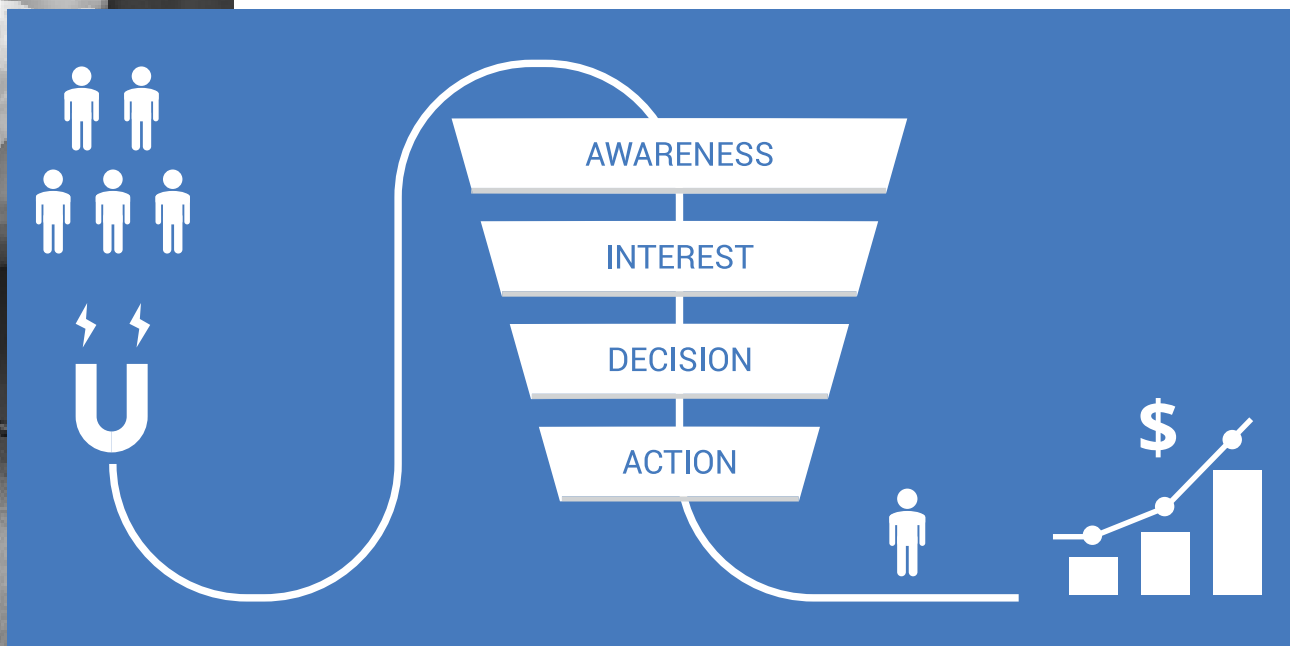


Tie your hair and avoid wearing earrings, rings, and necklaces.



- **DiSC profiling of patients** could also prove beneficial. Understanding the psychological approach your patients need to take to reintegrate with everyday life after the COVID-19 outbreak will help you to provide the support they need and therefore a better service that they will appreciate. If you can identify the common profiles of your patient demographic, you can prepare to address their needs more fully.
- **Contact your suppliers and support companies** to see how they can help you prepare for reopening. They might be able to provide marketing materials, guidance on order timeframes, recommendations on labs or other businesses already open if your normal supply channels are not yet functional.

Many of the above steps, combined with the improved accessibility of social media channels and updated website functions, constitute the marketing funnel. While we understand that most practices will be looking to re-engage with existing patients before seeking new people at this time, marketing to the existing patient database is still crucial. These activities would be complemented by requesting online reviews from patients who have attended the practice either recently or for many years. This gives the practice's online presence a boost and adds to its reputation going forwards.



Communicating with patients

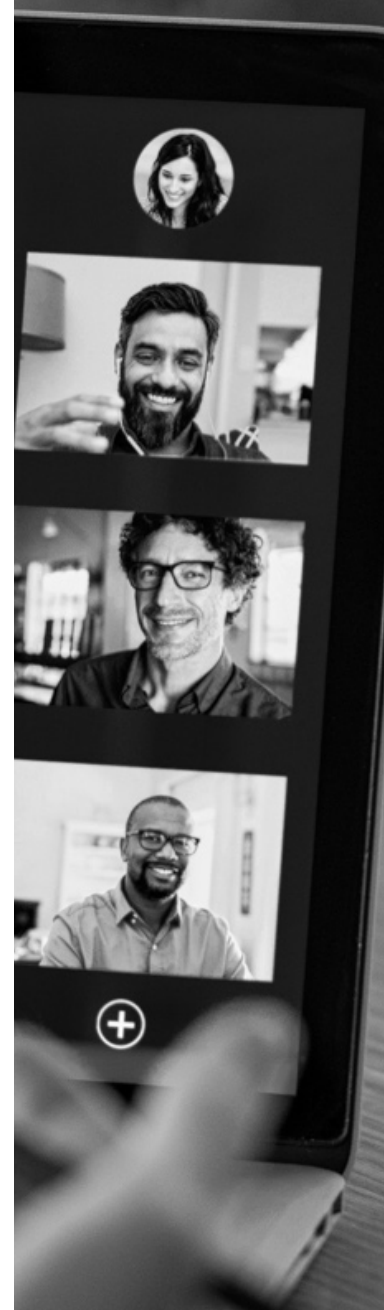
So, what exactly should you be saying to your existing patient base? Of course, it's important to let your patients know when you will reopen, either with a letter, phone call, text message or email – however your patients prefer to be contacted. They also need to be aware of what services and treatments are available to them. Ensure there is something on your website and social media pages too.

However, these are not the only messages you should be communicating. The COVID-19 pandemic has caused much concern among a large proportion of the general public, who have become more aware of the importance of hygiene and managing cross contamination. As such, it is vital that you reassure your patients of the measures you have in place to ensure their safety.

For you as a dental professional, most of these measures will be standard protocols that you have always adhered to as a matter of good infection control. So, why not tell your patients as such? They need to know that you have always maintained the highest cleaning and disinfection standards, and that you will continue to do everything you can to protect them. They need to know that you:

- Follow and adhere to recommendations put in place by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).
- Use disposable PPE.
- Disinfect all surfaces in the surgery between patients, as well as at the start and end of the day.
- Clean and disinfect all areas of the practice every day.
- Zone work spaces to avoid contamination.
- Have a dedicated decontamination room/area for sterilization.
- Use high speed aspiration.

By letting patients know that they have always been and will continue to be in safe hands, it will go some way to alleviate any fears or concerns they may have about infection transmission in the dental practice. Consequently, they will be more likely to attend the practice when it reopens, enabling them to receive the dental care they need and helping the business get back on its feet quicker.





The Straumann Group is here to help

As mentioned earlier, we understand that every practice is different and everyone will have unique needs and challenges both now and as they prepare to reopen their practices. That's why our teams from across the Straumann Group will be doing whatever we can to support you and your colleagues. So, how can we help?

Our training

- We offer and support a wide range of training courses covering a broad spectrum of topics from implants to restorative dentistry and orthodontics. Whether you wish to refresh your knowledge or learn new skills, the Straumann Group and associated training providers can help.
- Our Online Learning Resources could be the perfect place for you and your entire team to see all the solutions that you have researched in person, helping you make the very best decision for you and your business.
- We offer training on selling and conversion rate improvement via online platforms to ensure you make the most of every opportunity that comes your way.

Our products

- DenToGo utilises cutting-edge AI technology that will help you maximise efficiencies when you're back in practice. It facilitates remote treatment monitoring, meaning patients need return to the practice less frequently, freeing up time to see as many people as possible. This is also a worthwhile tool to help prepare the practice to operate more efficiently through any future outbreaks or similar incidences in the years to come.
- ClearCorrect offers an opportunity to maximise on cost-efficiencies by offering a highly affordable treatment solution. The Flex pay-as-you-go and Unlimited (as many aligners and retainers as needed for 5 years) schemes also enable flexibility to suit the clinical and financial needs of patients.
- In the digital arena, we offer an array of cutting-edge solutions – such as intraoral scanners, chairside milling units and innovative implant design software – designed to streamline and simplify the professional workflow, while optimising clinical outcomes and patient experiences. The entire digital workflow is supported.

Our services

- We can provide online training for some of our products, such as the ClearCorrect aligner system. We also have a comprehensive, open-access knowledge centre for this system on the website to complement training.
- When you're preparing to reopen, our teams can help you organize practice events to generate interest and new patients.
- We are part of an extensive network of dental professionals across the UK. We can utilise this network to help you focus on and build your referral network.
- We offer an extensive range of marketing materials that you can use to promote the treatments you offer. These can also help to demonstrate your investment in state-of-the-art equipment and technology, which many patients will value. In addition, we can help with ideas regarding what to post on social media, your website and other channels you utilise.
- Many of our team members have worked in practice themselves, so they understand what challenges you may face as you return to work. That means they have a wealth of practical and personal advice and ideas to discuss with you to help get your business into shape quickly.

For more information on any of the above, just give your local Straumann Group representative a call or send an email. They would be more than happy to help, or they can pass your query onto someone who can. We're here to support you as you get back on your feet, whatever that support may look like.

Throughout all of this, it is important that we all remain flexible and that we adapt to the situation as anything changes. We need to be agile and to do what we can to ensure that patients receive the quality care they need. Communication is key – by working together and going the extra mile where we can, we can all look forward to successfully getting back to normal as soon as possible.





Why Immediacy matters now more than ever

In an environment where both patients and dental care teams are carefully weighing exposure risks providing immediate treatment solutions is more critical than ever. By following immediate treatment protocols, whether providing dental implants on the day of extraction or by providing a temporary crown on the day of implant surgery, clinicians can restore terminal dentition in a manner that will seem less risky to their patients while also reducing exposure risks to their teams, managing practice costs and increasing profitability.

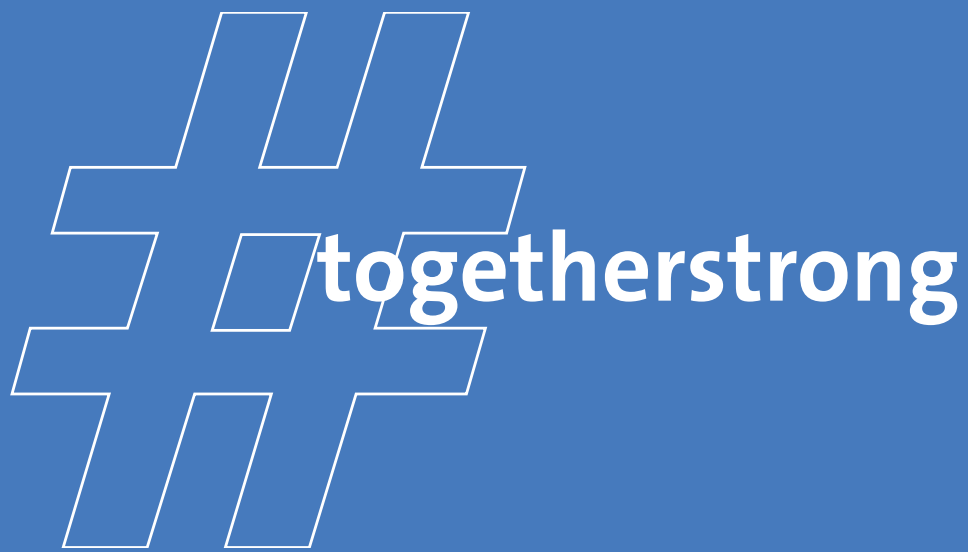
Even before the pandemic began patients were increasingly seeking same day solutions in dental care; a patient who can expect their online order to arrive at their doorstep the next day may not feel satisfied by a three week wait for a crown or returning for several visits over the course of year to replace their missing tooth. Now patients may prefer a treatment plan that requires as few office visits as possible. If they are seeking multiple opinions, they are likely to choose the practice that guarantees the shortest time to teeth with the fewest number of visits.

In this environment practices offering immediate solutions will have a clear advantage over those that remain conventional. The advantage extends not only to the increased case acceptance that comes from meeting patient demand for faster treatment but also has the potential to expand the radius of referrals; if patients can limit the number of trips to complete the treatment course they will consider traveling further. Efficient use of chair time by billing for multiple procedures in one visit can improve the profitability of the practice and depending on the goals of the practice allow for either increased revenue from their current workweek or reducing working hours. Finally, by working efficiently through immediate protocols the team will spend less time in confining PPE and will face less potential exposure to each patient improving morale and retention of the practice talent.

Successfully implementing immediate protocols requires the right tools, equipment, education and training for the practice team. Digital solutions are especially critical because they can eliminate multiple steps in the traditional workflow and increase efficiency. Straumann's Immediacy portfolio includes several digital solutions designed for immediate protocols: coDiagnostiX® treatment planning software, intraoral scanners for faster impressions, digitally designed immediate temporary prostheses, the Smile in a Box outsourced treatment planning and guide design service that allows clinicians to offer immediate temporary crowns and dentures on the day of implant placement. By combining these digital solutions with the BLX implant, which is designed to provide high primary stability in extraction sockets, a clinician has the armamentarium to meet and exceed their patients' expectations.

To put these tools into practice Straumann offers both on demand and live webinar-based education offerings on immediate protocols so the entire practice team can learn together from their security of their own homes.

Offering immediate solutions is now more important than ever – Straumann is here to support you each step of the way ...



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 **Anthogyr**

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