

Reducing and Managing DNAs

1. Remind patients about appointments

Text message reminder services will help limit numbers of appointments missed.

Is there an option to send a text asking people to confirm they are attending their appointment? If they don't confirm the appointment within X number of minutes/hours the appointment gets released.

2. Book less far ahead

Limiting how far ahead patients can book appointments can help reduce DNAs.

Only booking on the day appointments could remove the issue of DNAs completely.

3. Warning letters

Send letters to patients when they miss appointments, highlight the consequences of their non-attendance and the impact this has had on other people trying to get appointments at the surgery.

4. Ban booked appointments

Operate a 'three strikes' policy. Ban patients from booking appointments ahead once they have been warned three times about DNAs. They can then only book on the day appointments.

5. Removal from practice list

Take a tougher approach to dealing with the problem. Warn patients that after three appointments missed they will be removed from the practice list.

6. Communicate the consequence of missed appointments

Use posters or your media screens to let your patients know the scale of the problem. Tell them the consequences of non-attendance to other patients and to themselves.

Alternatively try displaying attendance rates rather than the number of missed appointments.

7. Deal with Repeat Offenders

Have a 'repeat DNA' slot each day to coincide with 'sit & wait urgent surgery'. Patients who regularly DNA have an alert on their record and are only offered appointments at this time, meaning if they fail to attend, the slot isn't technically wasted as the GP will just see someone waiting for the urgent surgery instead.

9. Encourage use of Online Booking Systems

It is proven that patient led booking keeps clinics full and reduces DNAs.

10. Read-back

Ask the patient to repeat back their appointment date/time to the receptionist when they book.

12. Care Navigation

Up-skill your reception team to help them only make appropriate appointments.

13. Online Calendar Notifications

Utilise text messaging software that enables appointments to go directly into the patients online calendars. Patients can then receive notifications of appointments 30 minutes prior to their appointment (dependent on patient's phone settings).

14. Easy Cancellation

Make it easy and straightforward for patients to cancel appointments. Have a dedicated line, text messaging service or online cancellation functionality.

15. Telephone Appointments

Do all your appointments need to be done in person? Some appointments and reviews could be done via the telephone.

Perhaps only offer repeat offenders telephone appointments in the first instance.

16. Offer Convenient Appointment Times

Offering evening appointments when people are not trying to squeeze an appointment between work and school runs may mean they are less likely to miss their appointment.